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## **Michigan Brewers Guild Presents Awards to Industry Leaders**

(LANSING, Mich) – The Michigan Brewers Guild recognized two industry leaders at its annual conference, January 15, at Boyne Highlands Resort in Harbor Springs.

**John Linardos**, artist, reckless entrepreneur and President of Motor City Brewing Works—the second oldest operating brewery in Michigan (1994-present)—was presented with the **Tom Burns Award**. John was introduced to the world of brewing while a student at Wayne State University. In 1988, he began working with Ben Edwards (the original owner of Traffic Jam) on the Detroit & Mackinac Brewing Company. It was during those early years that he met and developed a working relationship with Tom Burns. In 1994, John incorporated Motor City Brewing Works and in 1995, he released his first beer.

The Tom Burns Award was named after Detroit & Mackinac Brewing Company founder and brewer, Tom Burns, who passed away of cancer May 1, 1994. Burns, a “recovering attorney” whose passion was brewing, is credited with many of the advancements in brewing legislation, rules, and regulations in the 1990s which paved the way for a thriving industry which is currently ranked #5 nationally.

The Tom Burns Award is given to a person who embodies the pioneering spirit of the Michigan brewing industry. This is an individual whose hard work, passion, and perseverance has been a guiding force in creating the Great Beer State while being supportive of the entire craft beer industry in Michigan. Nominees can be brewery owners or employees, can be affiliated with a beer wholesaler or beer retailer or otherwise involved in the industry. Nominees can be part of the industry now or in the past and do not need to be currently living. Past winners include Larry Bell (2012) and Fred Bueltmann (2014).

**Rick Lack**, Executive Vice President of RAVE Associates, was presented with the inaugural **Michigan Beer Patriot Award**. This award is given to a person or organization who is a partner of our industry and who continually strives to promote or protect the craft beer industry in Michigan. Nominees can be individuals, wholesalers, retailers, affiliated businesses or can be groups or organizations.

Rick graduated in 1990 with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan Flint-School of Management. He worked in the retail industry for 14 years, first as a grocery store manager at Busch’s corporate office as a New Facilities director—setting up and running six new stores. He joined Rave Associates in 2005 and is a self-proclaimed Michigan beer patriot! Rick is an avid University of Michigan and Detroit sports fan, and enjoys golfing.

The Michigan Brewers Guild was formed in 1997 and held its first festival in July 1998. Today, the Guild hosts four festivals dedicated exclusively to Michigan craft beer produced by its 140-plus member breweries.

The Guild exists to unify the community of brewers, to increase the sale of Michigan Craft Beer, to contribute culturally and economically throughout the state, and to monitor and assure a healthy brewing industry. By working collaboratively with proponents of craft beer, we strive to achieve a 10% share of all beer sold in Michigan by producing world-class events, increasing public awareness, educating consumers, and encouraging responsible consumption.

Michigan ranks #5 in the nation for the number of craft breweries – thus supporting its claim as “The Great Beer State”.

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**PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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