



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **State Supports Saginaw Quality of Life**

*Saginaw Art Museum, FirstMerit Bank Event Park Receive Funds*

**Saginaw, Mich., July 1, 2014** --- Gov. Rick Snyder signed into law the 2015 State of Michigan budget that includes \$1.7 million in funding for the Saginaw Art Museum and FirstMerit Bank Event Park. This allocation supports two priority projects that impact the quality of life in Saginaw County and the Great Lakes Bay Region.

"Over the course of the budget process, I advocated for the Saginaw Art Museum, FirstMerit Bank Event Park, funding for the Saginaw River dredging pilot study and the Flint River Dike system —a total of nearly \$3 million. I am pleased that I was able to include all four of these priority projects into the coming year's budget," said State Senator Roger Kahn. "These projects will enrich our residents' lives through enhancement of the arts, improved access to outdoor entertainment, potential jobs related to increased river commercial traffic and preserving our safety through maintaining effective flood control in southern Saginaw County."

The Saginaw Art Museum will receive \$1 million that will be used to continue the execution of its strategic plan which focuses on sustainability and efficiency. The museum's goal is to be a driving force in the quality of life for its constituents, and a champion for arts education in the Great Lakes Bay.

"We greatly appreciate and extend our gratitude to Governor Snyder and Senator Kahn for recognizing our efforts. This support allows us to continue our mission of providing 'art for all' through education, exhibition, collection and preservation of art, and to maximize the impact of improving the quality of life in the Great Lakes Bay Region. I am excited about our future," said Stacey Gannon, Executive Director, Saginaw Art Museum.

The FirstMerit Bank Event Park is a new outdoor entertainment venue in Downtown Saginaw across from TheDow Event Center that features national touring concerts, community events and festivals. The \$700,000 in State funding will support the project including phase three construction of dressing rooms, restrooms, a mechanical and electrical room and a small office space. The 5,500-seat Event Park was opened in the Summer of 2013 and provides both pavilion and lawn seating.

"We are very appreciative of the State's support of the final construction phase for the Event Park," said Saginaw County Building Authority Chair and Saginaw County Controller Robert Belleman. "Public and private sector collaboration has led to the redevelopment of a large Saginaw parcel, helped revitalize Downtown and has provided our residents with a fantastic outdoor venue."

The Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce advocated for the aforementioned Saginaw quality of life projects. Saginaw Future Inc. assisted the Building Authority and SMG, which manages the Event Park, with grant writing and administration, and is working with the Art Museum through the grant allocation process. The Chamber and Saginaw Future are also working with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Army Corps of Engineers, City and County of Saginaw and Bay City on a Saginaw River Channel Dredging Feasibility Study that would examine the economic and environmental impact of widening and deepening of the Saginaw River Shipping Channel.

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