

The Musicians of the Grand Rapids Symphony and AFM Local 56 welcome you to Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the 60th annual ICSOM conference, August 24-27!

Heralded by *The Wall Street Journal* as the second best place to live in the country, and by *Forbes* as being the best US city for raising a family, Grand Rapids is also the location of the first Starbucks store in Michigan whose employees voted to unionize.

We have taken several steps to make this ICSOM conference memorable, beginning with the hotel selection. Opened in 2019, the Embassy Suites by Hilton/Grand Rapids Downtown includes a complimentary made-to-order breakfast, a manager's happy hour reception, a \$10/night self or valet parking, and all guest rooms having a view of the Grand River plus a private balcony. The city's free downtown shuttle service "DASH" runs every 15 minutes and has a stop in front of our hotel. The negotiated \$129 (plus tax) per-night room rate also will be available two days before and after the conference so that you may consider adding a few extra days to enjoy scenic west Michigan.

Next, four optional free activities have been planned for your selection on Friday evening so that you can experience our part of the country. The choices include "Discover Beer City USA", "African American History Walking Tour Along the Grand", "Visit Frank Lloyd Wright's Meyer May House", or "Hike the Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan", with details for sign up at ICSOM's online registration.

In addition, Saturday morning's optional service event will be at St Mark's Episcopal Church, our city's oldest public building (1848), when you will have an opportunity to perform chamber music at their weekly Breakfast Café for the downtown homeless.

Finally, the Wednesday evening mixer has been organized with a Michigan theme. It will be held at the Downtown Market, the country's first LEED certified public market. Downtown Market's opening day in 2013 attracted more than 30,000 people. The space has become a popular local and regional destination that celebrates west Michigan's rich agricultural community to local residents, foodies, and city visitors alike.

We look forward to seeing you in Grand Rapids in August!

Sincerely,

Paul Austin, Barbara Corbato, Jack Latta

Grand Rapids Symphony Musicians' Association (GRSMA) and AFM Local 56