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AGC of America Chief Economist Predicts Strong Future for West Michigan Construction, Employment

Grand Rapids — The Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Michigan hosted Ken Simonson, chief economist for the AGC of America, to discuss trends and predictions for the construction industry and employment in West Michigan at an event at Founders Brewing today.

"West Michigan, but particularly Grand Rapids, is on a prolonged growth spurt, and the local construction industry is both benefiting and contributing to it," said Simonson. "Prospects remain bright for both the overall economy and for construction locally. With a diversified economy and ongoing population growth, construction will remain a vibrant contributor to well-being in Grand Rapids."

Like Michigan as a whole, which followed the state's auto industry down into a steady decline in employment throughout much of the first decade of the 2000s, total nonfarm payroll employment in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming metro area fell from 2000 until 2009. Since then, however, the metro area has rebounded strongly. Total employment has increased for eight years in a row, reaching new records for the last three years.

Metro Grand Rapids employment has jumped more than 25 percent since 2009 to 555,000 in August, far outpacing state and national employment gains. While the state has also added jobs in each of the past eight years, its recovery has been more modest—15 percent—and statewide employment remains well below the peak set in 2000. U.S. employment overall during that span has risen only half as fast as in the metro area—less than 13 percent.

"AGC of Michigan members are playing a key role in the improving construction economy in West Michigan and across the state," said Damian P. Hill, president and chief executive officer of AGC of Michigan. "Our association provides professional safety training, education, legislative advocacy and labor relations options to ensure that our members have the knowledge and resources it takes to succeed in building Michigan's future."

The AGC of Michigan is a full-service construction trade association providing safety, education and training, legislative & regulatory advocacy, human resources, labor relations options, construction information and affinity programs. AGC members are dedicated to skill, integrity and responsibility. For more information, visit www.agcmichigan.org.

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