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GOSITE POP UP OPENS THIS SUMMER

An Introductory Site Invites the Community to Sample Programs and Content, Provide Feedback for the Information Sharing Space Coming Soon to Downtown

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., July 15, 2014 – The Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM), together with members of the GoSite Coalition, will open a “Pop Up” to introduce the new GoSite information sharing space to the community, share design plans and drawings, offer samplings of upcoming programs and content, and encourage participation in the design and development prior to the full launch of the new downtown welcome center. Introductory GoSite Pop Up hours are Thursdays and Fridays, 10am to 9pm, and Saturdays 10am to 5pm from July 31 through mid-September.

The GoSite Coalition is a collaborative endeavor created to showcase the metro Grand Rapids area via a centralized location. Formed in April of 2013, initial members of the GoSite Coalition consist of the Grand Rapids Art Museum, Experience Grand Rapids, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc., Arena District, and the Grand Rapids Cultural Marketing Group, representing over 20 arts and cultural organizations. An Inclusion Committee, with over 17 community representatives, also advises the Coalition.

“Over the past year, we’ve seen the Downtown community grow in terms of residents, guests, and the events that bring them together,” said Kristopher Larson, President and CEO of Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. “It is important for DGRI to help to share information related to these new activities and interests with people who come to the GoSite looking to engage with the Downtown.”

The GoSite Pop Up will occupy the space in the northwest corner of GRAM at 101 Monroe Center, with access doors through the museum as well as directly from Monroe Center. The Pop Up is an engaging, interactive phase in the planning process, where visitors can stop in and learn more about this innovative addition to downtown Grand Rapids. A certified tourism ambassador (CTA) will be on hand to help visitors explore the Pop Up features and answer questions about the GoSite space and services.

“Grand Rapids has become a destination that is proud of its innovative and collaborative spirit. The GoSite promises to lend further evidence to both. The Experience Grand Rapids’ strategic plan supports the elevation of a culture of hospitality,” said Doug Small, President of Experience Grand Rapids. “One year ago we launched a Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) program and today we are the fastest growing program in the nation. The GoSite will further enhance our community’s culture of hospitality.”

The Pop Up will feature an informational wall display, where guests can try out some of the digital and social media features planned for the GoSite, including a personalized tour itinerary and

video hosts providing weekly tips and best bets. There will also be a condensed version of the GR Riddle, a game of wit and skill that tests player's knowledge of Grand Rapids landmarks and iconic places in the city – with hints along the way, and prizes of course!

The Pop Up will provide opportunities for feedback and idea sharing from visitors to the site, and one of the most important areas where input is requested is in building the "Pillars of the Community" feature. This is a story that needs many voices before final design of the display: what is our history, who are the early influencers, what were and are the major industries, what is the character and unique attributes of the citizens, what is the vision for the future, and who are the next generation of influencers moving us ahead? The many ideas from the community will be instrumental in the development of this project.

"GRAM is a 21st century art museum, one that uses its platform to be a community convener and a catalyst for creative thinking; a welcome space for the community to gather, to be inspired and to create a sense of place together," said Dana Friis-Hansen, GRAM Director and CEO. "As guided by GRAM's purpose statement to serve as a cultural beacon and civic anchor, the Art Museum is the perfect fit for the GoSite project, with a prime location and a successful history of collaboration across public, private and nonprofit organizations."

Overall, the Pop Up is a great chance for the public to get to know the GoSite better, and for the GoSite to become better because of the public input. All are encouraged to stop in, explore the site, and add their voice to the content and design.

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