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**CONTACT:** Kathy Barks Hoffman  
517-485-6600  
[khoffman@martinwaymire.com](mailto:khoffman@martinwaymire.com)

## **Shoppers Urged to Buy Nearby, Support Northern Michigan Retailers This Summer and Year-Round**

### ***Traverse City Businesses Join Buy Nearby Guy Ahead of Downtown Street Sale***

**TRAVERSE CITY, Mich.** — Northwest Michigan business owners from Traverse City today joined James P. Hallan of the Michigan Retailers Association (MRA) to remind residents that where they spend their shopping dollars during Friday's Downtown Street Sale and throughout the year matters a great deal to Michigan's local communities and state and local economies.

Speaking at the Traverse City Tourism office – located between the blue waters of Grand Traverse Bay and Traverse City's thriving downtown – Hallan said the state economy would grow by more than \$9 billion and nearly 75,000 new jobs would be created if Michigan residents made sure to buy from retailers in Michigan, rather than from out-of-state sellers who don't invest in the state.

"Michigan communities such as Traverse City – which will be celebrating the Downtown Street Sale on Friday – benefit from having attractive and exciting businesses that, as an added plus, also offer made-in-Michigan products," said Hallan, MRA president and CEO. "We know that retail purchases made right here in Michigan have a monumental impact on our state and communities."

Michigan Department of Treasury figures show that retail trade accounted for \$93.7 billion in economic activity in Michigan in fiscal year 2014, not counting food and drug purchases. That figure, Hallan said, has plenty of room to grow.

To encourage shoppers to visit nearby retailers, MRA has launched the Buy Nearby campaign, an ongoing, year-round, feel-good campaign intended to create excitement about the great shopping in Michigan and the advantages of supporting retailers and communities in Michigan. The Buy Nearby campaign includes a special Get Caught Blue-Handed Day celebration, which this year will fall on Saturday, Oct. 3. Retailers across the state will be offering special deals and promotions.

Hallan was accompanied Thursday by Buy Nearby Guy, the campaign mascot that's an 8-foot-tall representation of a shopping bag in the shape of Michigan, colored blue to mirror Michigan's lakes and skies. The campaign also includes an #ibuynearby photo contest that awards Discover gift cards to shoppers chosen from among those who post photos on social media of themselves buying nearby at Michigan retailers.

"Buy Nearby Guy is a big and highly visible reminder to shoppers to spend their money in the Mitten, regardless of whether it's the local community where they live, work, vacation or just visit," Hallan said. "The #ibuynearby photo contest is another fun way for shoppers to show they support retailers in their community."

Golden Shoes owner Bill Golden said his family-owned business has been in place since 1883 and served generations of area residents. He values the fact that many have been coming to Golden Shoes since they were small.

“About half of every dollar spent in a Michigan store goes back into the local and Michigan economies, and more than 866,000 jobs are directly dependent on retail sales,” Golden said. “We’re proud to offer customers special service and a wide range of choices in downtown Traverse City.”

Also joining in the news conference was Traverse City Mayor Michael Estes. The mayor said Traverse City’s expanding entertainment and shopping options give Michigan shoppers a great reason to buy nearby, especially during the Downtown Street Sale, which runs from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday.

“Area retailers offer customers a personalized, hands-on experience that out-of-state online retailers just can’t match,” Estes said. “Our businesses rely on dedicated customers who realize the value they offer and buy nearby because of it.”

Karen Hilt runs My Secret Stash, a downtown store that offers retail space to 100 Michigan creators who make artworks, specialty foods and other items.

“Whether a shopper buys from me or from one of the other businesses in the store, the money stays in Michigan,” Hilt says. “By buying nearby, shoppers are supporting someone’s dream to create something on their own.”

Misha Neidorfler, vice president of the Downtown Traverse City Association and owner of Morsels Espresso + Edibles, noted that Golden Shoes, Morsels and My Secret Stash are among the many businesses drawing people to Traverse City.

“We hope shoppers choose the quality products offered at Michigan retailers and the good feeling that comes from supporting Michigan’s economy,” Neidorfler said. “By buying Michigan-made products and supporting Michigan retailers, shoppers support their friends and neighbors who work in those businesses.”

Brad Van Dommelen, president and CEO of Traverse City Tourism, said buying nearby keeps communities vibrant.

“Our area retailers – large and small – offer visitors fun and interesting experiences, whether that’s hanging out at the Downtown Street Sale, sailing on Grand Traverse Bay, visiting our fine wineries, brew pubs and restaurants or shopping at the many businesses in the Traverse City area,” Van Dommelen said.

A Buy Nearby Fact Sheet highlighting the benefits that buying nearby brings is attached. Additional information is available at [BuyNearbyMI.com](http://BuyNearbyMI.com) and [Facebook.com/BuyNearbyMI](https://www.facebook.com/BuyNearbyMI).

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*The Michigan Retailers Association is the unified voice of Michigan’s retail industry, representing nearly 5,000 member businesses and their more than 15,000 stores and websites. Retail is responsible for more than 850,000 jobs in Michigan.*