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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

6th annual GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation announces 2017 dates

- *Lineup of this year's performers to be revealed at H.O.M.E. at The B.O.B. on April 26, part of International Jazz Day celebrations*

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. – March 23, 2017 – **GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation returns to Rosa Parks Circle in downtown Grand Rapids, Mich., this Aug. 19 and 20**, for the sixth annual festival. The popular family-friendly festival is West Michigan's only free, weekend-long jazz festival.

The two-day festival will again be free thanks to Presenting Sponsor DTE Energy Foundation, the City of Grand Rapids and other sponsoring organizations, individuals and volunteers.

"There's something special about jazz that brings people together like no other art form. It's because jazz is so diverse – it has so many styles, from Big Band to Latin to Contemporary, and I'm just naming a few," GRandJazzFest Founder Audrey Sundstrom said. "GRandJazzFest is what community is all about."

GRandJazzFest typically draws thousands to the heart of downtown Grand Rapids for the two-day, outdoor event always held the third weekend in August.

Holding the festival in the center city is by design, to enable festival-goers to take in all that downtown has to offer: restaurants, clubs, museums, microbreweries and shops. The festival typically occurs during [Restaurant Week in Grand Rapids](#). The festival's location provides easy access to those who ride the bus, walk or bike, and is also close to parking.

DTE Energy Foundation returns as the Presenting Sponsor for the sixth year in a row.

"The DTE Energy Foundation is proud to once again bring free, world-class jazz music to downtown Grand Rapids," said Faye Nelson, vice president at DTE Energy, board chair and president of the DTE

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Energy Foundation. “By investing in GRandJazzFest, we’re helping to boost the local economy, strengthen the vitality of the region, and show off all that Grand Rapids and West Michigan offer.”

GR and Jazz (the non-profit, all-volunteer-run producer of GRandJazzFest) is pleased to announce a special collaboration with the Grand Rapids Art Museum: Under an agreement with GRAM, the festival’s VIP area will be located on the GRAM front terrace where refreshments and snacks will be provided. The VIP area is for sponsors of GRandJazzFest. Additionally, GRAM will have an outdoor bar area set up at the base of its front steps adjoining Rosa Parks Circle for attendees who would like to purchase and consume refreshments and enjoy the festival.

The 2017 festival lineup will be announced on April 26 at the House of Entertainment and Music (H.O.M.E.) at The B.O.B. That night at H.O.M.E., the Steve Hilger Jazz Quintet takes the stage. Hilger’s band has performed at past GRandJazzFests. Hilger also serves as a board member of GR and Jazz.

“Jazz is a year-round passion here in West Michigan. We’re excited about a fun evening and a great way to reveal our 2017 lineup to jazz fans on April 26,” Hilger said.

Like last year’s reveal event, festival organizers will coordinate with leaders at [International Jazz Day](#) to include GRandJazzFest’s announcement as a sanctioned International Jazz Day event.

At the 2017 festival in August, 11 diverse jazz artists and bands will perform, including a student jazz band and two major headline acts. Free face painting by Fancy Faces will be available for kids and, if lines aren’t too long, for “kids at heart.”

Grand Rapids city commissioners approved GRandJazzFest as one the events that it will co-sponsor in 2017, a distinction only given to events that have proven to be successful and enrich the community. GRandJazzFest 2016 received distinction as a Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. Signature Event along with two other festivals, ArtPrize and LaughFest.

In addition to DTE Energy Foundation, the City of Grand Rapids, and GRAM, sponsors for the 2017 event to date include GR and Jazz, IntentPR, Gilmore Collection, Hilger Hammond, Amway Hotel Corporation, Experience Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids Community College, Swift Printing, Corporate Live, Lake Michigan Credit Union, Matt Huizenga Video Production, Meijer, Steelcase, Rockford Construction, Kitchen67 and MoxieMen. Sponsorship opportunities are available at <http://grandjazzfest.org/sponsors/>.

“We are so grateful to all of our sponsors for their support – we could not do it without them,” Sundstrom said. “We’re seeking additional sponsors to help us bring a full weekend of FREE, family-friendly live jazz performances to West Michigan!”



People can get a taste of past GRandJazzFests by viewing the “recap” videos here:

<http://grandjazzfest.org/newsroom/video/>

More information on the 6th annual GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation can be found at www.grandjazzfest.org, and at the festival’s Facebook and Twitter sites – www.facebook.com/grandjazzfest and www.twitter.com/grandjazzfest.

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About GRandJazzFest

GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation is a community event of the nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization “GR and Jazz” founded in 2012, with the purpose of promoting and bringing awareness of jazz and related arts to new and diverse audiences through educational programs and community events. GRandJazzFest 2017 is a FREE weekend-long event that runs Saturday, Aug. 19, from noon until 10 p.m., and Sunday, Aug. 20, from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., featuring notable jazz artists, including many who are Michigan-based. GRandJazzFest brings together acclaimed jazz performers as well as highlights emerging artists for diverse audiences. GRandJazzFest is being held at Rosa Parks Circle, a central location in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, where attendees can enjoy music, support local businesses and visit other Grand Rapids attractions. The festival is FREE. More information at www.grandjazzfest.org.

About the DTE Energy Foundation

The DTE Energy Foundation is the philanthropic arm of DTE Energy, continuing the legacy of community support and involvement of its electric and natural gas utilities, which serve 2.2 million electric customers in Southeast Michigan and 1.3 million natural gas customers in Michigan. In 2015, the DTE Energy Foundation provided \$15 million in grant support to nonprofits throughout the company’s service territories. As one of Michigan’s leading corporate citizens, DTE Energy is a force for growth and prosperity in the 450 Michigan communities it serves in a variety of ways, including philanthropy, volunteerism and economic progress. <http://www.dteenergy.com/foundation>.