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“Only in Grand Rapids”

Grand Rapids, MI – The thoughtful traveler seeking exclusive cultural and entertainment options need look no further than Grand Rapids, Michigan. While many may recognize Grand Rapids as the home of the 38th President, Gerald R. Ford, Grand Rapids also is a premiere arts and cultural destination, boasting many one-of-a-kind experiences in the state, and in the nation.

United States Exclusives:

- In 1969, Grand Rapids received the first ever grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts for urban sculpture, which was used to purchase “La Grande Vitesse” by Alexander Calder. Today, downtown Grand Rapids boasts some 20 sculptures by such acclaimed artists as Calder, Mark DiSuvero, Maya Lin and Joseph Kinnebrew.
- Rosa Parks Circle in downtown Grand Rapids is the first ever urban park designed by Maya Lin, creator of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. Rosa Parks Circle includes elements showcasing water in frozen, liquid and vapor states.
- The Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids is one of only two places in the world to see The American Horse, originally conceptualized by Leonardo Da Vinci 500 years ago, and brought to life in 1999 by sculptor Nina Akamu. This stunning bronze sculpture stands 24 feet high and weighs 15 tons. The second American Horse is located in Milan, Italy.
- Frederik Meijer Gardens also boasts the largest temporary butterfly exhibition in the nation. Each March and April, thousands of colorful, exotic butterflies from Central and South America and Asia grace the Lena Meijer Conservatory for a period of eight weeks.
- The Public Museum of Grand Rapids was the first public museum in the nation to receive official accreditation from the American Museums Association.

- If your name is Robert, Bob, Roberta or some variation thereof, you can join The BOB Club at The BOB in Grand Rapids. The BOB (short for “big old building”) is a 70,000 square foot, restored historic warehouse with five restaurants, a nightclub and a comedy club in downtown Grand Rapids’ entertainment district. Membership in The BOB Club is free, and you don’t have to be from Grand Rapids to participate. Club benefits are numerous, and listed on the website at www.thebob.com.

Michigan Exclusives:

- The 1913 Room at Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids is the only AAA Five-Diamond restaurant in the entire state, and one of only 46 in the U.S.
- Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is the largest botanical garden in Michigan with the most comprehensive sculpture collection in the Midwest. Highlights include 125 acres of botanical gardens, a 30-acre sculpture park and a five-story, 15,000 square-foot tropical conservatory.
- Grand Rapids Ballet Company is Michigan’s only professional ballet dance company, now in its 33rd season.
- Jewish Theater of Grand Rapids is the only Michigan theater that specializes in plays either written by Jewish playwrights, or that explore Jewish culture.
- Grand Rapids’ Calvin College is the only Michigan venue to host **Petra: Lost City of Stone**, the most comprehensive exhibit ever presented on the ancient city of Petra, and the first major cultural collaboration between Jordan and the United States. This exhibit will showcase more than 200 objects, many on public display outside Jordan for the first time in history and Grand Rapids is the only site to host the exhibit in the Upper Midwest. It will be on exhibit from April 4 – August 15, 2005.
- Grand Rapids is home to the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum.

For additional information about all that Grand Rapids has to offer, consumers may contact the Grand Rapids/Kent County Convention & Visitors Bureau online at www.visitgrandrapids.org, or toll-free at 1-800-678-9859.

Editor’s note: High resolution images available upon request.