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Southwest Michigan First Names Greg Dobson as New Board Chair

*Aaron Zeigler Transitions to Immediate Past Chair Role After Five Years of Exceptional Service as Chair;
Greg Dobson Brings Development Expertise to Leadership Role.*

KALAMAZOO, Mich. –Southwest Michigan First, is pleased to announce the appointment of Greg Dobson as chair of the board of directors, effective immediately. Aaron Zeigler, who has led the board with distinction since 2020, will remain an active board member, ensuring a seamless transition and continued dedication to the organization’s mission.

During Aaron Zeigler’s tenure as chair, Southwest Michigan First achieved significant milestones, such as helping companies create more than 4,000 new jobs, retain another 1,600 jobs, and secure over \$5 billion in capital investment throughout the seven counties that make up the Southwest Michigan region. Additionally, under his leadership, the board of directors expanded to 75 members, making it one of the largest leadership organizations of its kind in Michigan.

In 2023, Southwest Michigan First introduced a three-year strategic action plan, called *The Path to Regional Prosperity*, designed to unite the region and advance its mission to increase economic prosperity for all in Southwest Michigan. With exemplary leaders representing major employers from across the region serving on its board of directors, the economic development organization is positioned to foster economic development growth, attract top talent, and promote vibrant communities.

“It has been a tremendous honor to serve as chair of the board of directors at Southwest Michigan First and work alongside such passionate and talented individuals. Our organization is stronger than ever, and I look forward to supporting the board and Greg Dobson in this new capacity,” said Aaron Zeigler, president of Zeigler Automotive Group.

Greg Dobson, a seasoned executive in the construction management and real estate development industries, is a proud graduate of Western Michigan University, a highly accomplished community leader, and has been a member of the board since 2018. He brings extensive experience in residential, commercial, office, and industrial development and construction to the role.

“I am excited to step into this important leadership role for our region. Together, we will continue to advance regional collaboration and drive meaningful impact for Southwest Michigan First and the communities we serve,” said Greg Dobson, chairman of Southwest Michigan First and chief operating officer and principal of AVB.

For more information or to download a copy of the strategic action plan, *The Path to Regional Prosperity*, visit www.southwestmichiganfirst.com.

About Southwest Michigan First

Southwest Michigan First is a privately funded community and economic development organization whose mission is to increase economic prosperity for all in Southwest Michigan. Founded in 1999 on the

principle that *the greatest force for change is a job*, the organization works across all industries to advance economic, workforce, and community development initiatives throughout the seven counties the make up the Southwest Michigan region.

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