



## NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

Contact: Shirley Roberts  
BaySail Executive Director  
Tall Ship Celebration Event Coordinator  
Phone: 989-895-5193  
Email: [info@tallshipcelebration.com](mailto:info@tallshipcelebration.com)

Date: August 23, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Michigan Sugar Company signs on as Port Sponsor for 2019 Tall Ship Celebration

*Sweet news for event organizers and the Great Lakes Bay Region*

BAY CITY, MICHIGAN – **Bay City's Tall Ship Celebration**, the tri-annual maritime festival that attracts tens of thousands of visitors to the Bay City waterfront, announced today that Michigan Sugar Company is the new Port Sponsor for the 2019 event, which takes place July 18-21.

The company cited the quality of the event and its importance to Bay City and the Great Lakes Bay Region as factors in its decision.

“Michigan Sugar Company is proud to take the lead in supporting what we believe is one of the signature events, not only in the Great Lakes Bay Region, but in the entire Midwest,” said Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations for Michigan Sugar Company. “As Bay County’s second-largest employer, we can’t think of a better way to show our support for and commitment to this community and this region.”

Mary Lou Benecke, Chairwoman of the Festival Planning Council, explained the importance of sponsorship to the event.

“The investment in ships’ appearance fees, performances by international maritime musicians, free activities for children and families, marketing and promotion and all the other things that make Tall Ship Celebration a world-class, high-quality event, totaled more than \$730,000 in 2016,” said Benecke. “Our Port Sponsor and the other major ship sponsors play a critical role in the success of the festival in that their investment helps to pay the vessel appearance fees and allows us to keep admission prices affordable.”

Michigan Sugar Company joins returning major ship sponsors that already have committed for 2019: Consumers Energy, Wildfire Credit Union, Chemical Bank/Amerilodge Group, Huntington Bank, McLaren Bay Region and Independent Bank. It replaces former Port Sponsor Dow Corning Corp. that was wholly incorporated into the Dow Chemical Co. in 2016.

“On behalf of our entire Michigan Sugar family, we look forward to welcoming guests from all over the world to Bay City next year,” said Clark. “The Tall Ship Celebration is always a magical time, but it’s also an event that helps drive our local economy in a significant way. Michigan Sugar takes great pride in helping make next year’s event a bit sweeter, while adding to the economic vitality of this region.”

### **About Michigan Sugar Company**

Founded in 1906, Michigan Sugar Company is headquartered in Bay City, Michigan, and has sugarbeet processing facilities in Bay City, Caro, Croswell and Sebawaing, Michigan. The company’s nearly 1,000 grower-owners plant and harvest about 160,000 acres of sugarbeets each year. Those beets are sliced at the company’s factories and turned into about 1.2 billion pounds of sugar annually. That sugar is sold to industrial, commercial and retail customers under the Pioneer and Big Chief brands. Michigan Sugar Company has 750 year-round employees and an additional 1,300 seasonal workers. The company’s annual local economic impact is about \$520 million.

### **About Tall Ship Celebration: Bay City**

Tall Ship Celebration: Bay City hosts a fleet of tall ships when it visits the Great Lakes as part of the TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE series of races and rallies organized by Tall Ships America. Bay City has been the only official host port in the state of Michigan since 2006 and, as of the 2019 event, will be the longest-serving host port in the Great Lakes. Tall Ship Celebration has won the coveted “Port of the Year” award from Tall Ships America four times, more than any other host community in all of North America. Proceeds from the festival support BaySail, a nonprofit educational organization that owns and operates the tall ships *Appledore IV* and *V* from their home port of Bay City.

For more information about Tall Ship Celebration or BaySail, contact Shirley Roberts by phone at 989-895-5193, by email at [Shirleyr@baysailbaycity.org](mailto:Shirleyr@baysailbaycity.org), or visit [www.tallshipcelebration.com](http://www.tallshipcelebration.com).