City of Birmingham
A Walkable Community

MEMORANDUM

Birmingham Historical Museum & Park

DATE: **August 14, 2014**

TO: **Joe Valentine, City Manager**

FROM: **Leslie Pielack, Museum Director**

SUBJECT: **Announcement; Museum to Receive Award**

I'm pleased to announce that the Birmingham Historical Museum will be receiving a **Quest for Excellence Award** from the **Michigan Museums Association** at its annual meeting in September.

The award for "Best New Experience" recognizes outstanding achievement by a Michigan museum for innovative ways to enrich visitor experience and the importance of museums in forming meaningful connections between people and culture.

The Birmingham Historical Museum was selected for its recent success at the exhibition-related event, "Afternoon Backstage with Chad Smith," which brought the local rock star and special guests together at his exhibit at the museum. Smith, Grammy-award winning drummer for the Red Hot Chili Peppers, grew up in the area and is featured as part of the *Sounds of Birmingham* music exhibition. Attendees were able to meet Chad, share stories with him, and bring items to be autographed as special mementos of the occasion. The museum worked to keep the event personal and intimate for both guests and Smith, while raising needed funds. The reception brought the museum and its music exhibition to a whole new audience, and received rave reviews from both guests and Chad and his family. In particular, the musician was deeply touched when given the key to the city by Mayor Scott Moore, and later he and his family expressed their sincere thanks to the museum for giving them this wonderful opportunity. Other visitors described it as the experience of a lifetime.

A significant objective of the museum's strategic plan is to engage with the community in new ways and reinforce the museum's cultural relevance. By holding this event and keeping it meaningful and memorable for everyone involved, the Birmingham Historical Museum helped advance the notion that it is a dynamic place that has an active role to play in the community. The "Best New Experience" Quest for Excellence Award from MMA acknowledges this accomplishment, while also encouraging other museums to adopt similar creative strategies to enhance their visitors' experience.