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For Immediate Release:

Big Sky Collects Record Breaking Amount Of Lodging Tax In 3rd Quarter Of 2015

Latest Lodging Tax Numbers Show That Big Sky Is On Track For Biggest Year On Record

Big Sky, Montana | January 11, 2016 – Big Sky collected a record breaking amount of lodging tax during the 3rd quarter of 2015. The Montana Lodging Facility Use Tax, often called a bed tax or lodging tax, is a 4% tax collected from guests who stay overnight at hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, guest ranches, resorts, and campgrounds across the state. The lodging tax is collected by the state and is used to promote tourism in Montana. In addition to the lodging tax, Big Sky has a 3% sales tax, called Resort Tax, which is collected to improve the community .

According to the latest numbers from the Montana Office of Tourism And Business Development, Big Sky has seen steady annual growth of lodging tax revenue during the 3rd quarter since 2012. From July 1 to September 30, 2015 Big Sky collected \$466,617 in lodging tax - a 20% increase compared to the 3rd quarter of 2014. This is the highest amount of lodging tax collected in the 3rd quarter since the tax was enacted in 1987.

According to the National Travel & Tourism Office, the travel and tourism industry grew at twice the rate (4.3%) of the US economy (2.1%) during the 3rd quarter of 2015. This is the “fourth consecutive quarter in which the growth of travel and tourism output has outpaced the U.S. economy.” This is directly reflected in Big Sky’s numbers and Big Sky is on track for a record-breaking year. From January 1 to September 30, 2015, Big Sky collected a total of \$1,594,527 in lodging tax. For comparison, the total amount of lodging tax collected for the entire 2014 calendar year was \$1,605,126.

Overall, Montana reports that lodging tax is up 3% statewide through the 3rd quarter of 2015. It is up 5% statewide for the 2015 calendar year. Lodging tax revenue is given to the state of Montana and a portion is then divided between six tourism regions and 18 Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs). CVBs are nonprofit organizations dedicated to promoting tourism in their area. The Big Sky CVB is part of the Yellowstone Country region. Funds received help leverage dedicated advertising appropriations made by the local Resort Tax Board.

Tourism is one of Montana's largest industries - especially in the Big Sky area. Both the Big Sky & Greater Yellowstone Welcome Center and Yellowstone National Park had outstanding visitor numbers in 2015. The Big

Sky & Greater Yellowstone Welcome Center saw 14,495 visitors from May 1 to September 30, 2015 - a 73% increase since the same time period in 2014. According to a National Park Service press release issued on October 8, 2015, Yellowstone had already "surpassed the previous record for total annual visitation set in 2010." With three months left in 2015, YNP had already seen 3.8 million visits. The best year on record was 3.6 million visitors in 2010. These numbers could play a factor in Big Sky's booming 3rd quarter.

Based on the lodging tax numbers, the Big Sky area has shown steady growth in recent years with record numbers of people visiting our destination. "The latest 3rd quarter lodging tax revenue numbers show that Big Sky is becoming a multi-season tourism hotspot and that more people are staying overnight," stated Kitty Clemens, Executive Director of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce. "This is in large part due to the efforts of our partner, Visit Big Sky, and its year round advertising programs," concluded Clemens.

For more information on Big Sky's lodging tax, please contact Alex Mansfield at the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce at 406-995-3000 or visit the Big Sky Chamber website (<http://bigskychamber.com/>). To learn more about the lodging tax numbers, please visit the Montana Office of Tourism And Business Development website (<http://tourism.mt.gov/MontanasTourismIndustry/LodgingFacilityUseTax>). Read more about Big Sky's Resort Tax at [resorttax.org](http://www.resorttax.org) (<http://www.resorttax.org/>).

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About the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce

The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit association of more than 400 members at the local, state, and national level. The Chamber supports the community by operating the Big Sky & Greater Yellowstone Welcome Center conveniently located off of U.S. Highway 191, 43 miles south of Bozeman and just 50 miles north of the Yellowstone National Park west gate. For more information visit www.bigskychamber.com.