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For Immediate Release:

Montana Visitor Research Study Will Help Shape Big Sky's Future

Big Sky, Montana | October 26, 2015 – Visit Big Sky recently commissioned Longwoods International, a market research consultancy, to conduct a custom analysis of Montana's leisure and business travel visitor behaviors. The goal of the study is to provide strategic guidance to Visit Big Sky's marketing planning and product development efforts to help build future visitation.

The 2014 report provides valuable insight into the behaviors of people who recently traveled to Montana. Longwoods compiled the information by using their Travel USA research model. Travel USA is Longwoods' longest ongoing syndicated study. It is conducted quarterly and participants are selected randomly to complete online surveys about their trips.

Data from the report highlights participants' demographics, travel behavior, destinations visited, trip expenditures, planning and booking, transportation, accommodations, trip activities, special interests on trip, use of social media, and other pertinent information. The particular focus of this major study was overnight trips to Montana throughout 2014 with a special emphasis on Yellowstone National Park and Yellowstone region visitors. This information is particularly beneficial to the greater Big Sky community as it helps to define the travelers that visit Big Sky and the surrounding area.

Key results from the Longwoods International Travel USA Study include:

- Montana received 23.4 million visitors in 2014
 - Overnight visitors: 11.86 million
 - Day visitors: 11.55 million
- The Yellowstone region received 3.32 million visitors in 2014
 - Overnight visitors: 1.82 million
 - Day visitors: 1.5 million
- Overnight total trip expenditures averaged \$544
- Trips averaged 5.3 nights with 3.5 nights in Montana
- One in five fly-in
- 86% of trips were for leisure, 9% for business, 5% combined leisure and business

- The main purpose of marketable leisure trips to Montana include:
 - Touring - 14%
 - Outdoors - 13%
 - Special Events - 8%
 - Skiing/Snowboarding - 2%
- Aside from Montana, the majority of travelers came from:
 - California – 7%
 - Washington – 6%
 - Idaho – 5%
- Summer is high season. Four of ten overnight trips occur between July and September.
- Participation is highest in national/state parks, landmark/historic site, brewery, rodeo, and outdoor activity.

The Longwoods Big Sky 2014 Visitor Research report will prove to be a valuable tool for Big Sky’s travel and tourism industry. It can help focus local marketing and development, boost awareness of Big Sky’s primary market, and enable local businesses to see an increase in ROI.

Established in 1978, Longwoods International is a leader in brand research and ROI research. They focus on strategic market research for public and private clients around the globe. Their award-winning methodologies have been scrutinized and evaluated by respected professionals in a variety of fields. Longwoods has a proven track record of successfully helping tourism destinations understand what drives their market.

The Longwoods study will help Big Sky businesses and the Big Sky community plan, grow, and market for the future. Access to this research was made possible through funding from Resort Tax. Resort Tax supports Visit Big Sky’s advertising campaign that is dedicated to increasing visitation, length of stay, and visitor spending within our community.

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About Visit Big Sky

Visit Big Sky is a private, nonprofit organization responsible for marketing Big Sky, Montana as a leisure and convention destination. Visit Big Sky is funded from the Big Sky Resort Tax, administers Montana Office of Tourism lodging tax funds and collects private industry investments from business partners for public relations and advertising programs.