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For Immediate Release:

Big Sky Transportation Report Aims to Create Safe and Dependable Roads in an Unincorporated Community

New Transportation Report Makes Recommendations for Big Sky's Future Transportation Needs

Big Sky, Montana | April 15, 2016 – The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Western Transportation Institute met with Big Sky locals at three public meetings to address the transportation issues that Big Sky is currently facing. Now a full report from 3 listening session attended by more than one hundred people is available. The report includes recommendations about the current and future transportation needs of the Big Sky community. Efficient transportation, safe and dependable roads, and a proactive master plan are key components to Big Sky's long-term success.

Big Sky is in a unique position because it is an unincorporated area that straddles Gallatin and Madison counties. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) manages the main roads that provide access to Big Sky including US 191 and MT 64 (Lone Mountain Trail). Home Owner Associations and Special Improvement Districts manage other local roads. In order to create a long-term plan that can be successfully implemented, many different parties must be involved.

During the first few months of 2016, the Big Sky Chamber hosted three community meetings (January 27, February 3, and February 4) that were facilitated by Western Transportation Institute (WTI). WTI is a department of the College of Engineering at Montana State University and specializes in rural transportation issues and understands the critical role that rural transportation plays in the lives of the people, the environment, and the economy of Big Sky.

At the public meetings, locals provided feedback about the future transportation framework and roadway systems in Big Sky's three main neighborhoods: Mountain, Meadow, and Canyon. Kitty Clemens, Executive Director of the Big Sky Chamber, and David Kack from WTI gave brief presentations at these meetings and then opened up the meetings to the public. Over one hundred Big Sky residents took the opportunity to communicate their views and concerns about the transportation problems in Big Sky.

Based on the information collected during these informative sessions, David Kack, the Director of Small Urban and Rural Livability Center, a branch of the Western Transportation Institute, prepared an in-depth report

entitled Big Sky Transportation Review. The full report is available online at <http://bigskychamber.com/news/transportation/>.

Kack's report highlights the greatest concerns in the Mountain, Meadow, and Canyon as expressed by Big Sky locals. Those concerns included turn lanes, sight lines, speed limits, parking, pedestrian crossings, chain up areas, wildlife crossings, cell phone distraction zones, traffic, proper signage, drinking and driving, signal timing, road maintenance, access, and funding.

The Big Sky Transportation report recommends that Big Sky do two things:

- 1) Immediate Speed and Safety Study
- 2) Full Transportation Study of Big Sky Area

The Speed and Safety Study will address speed limits throughout the Big Sky area. Gallatin County and/or Madison County will need to request that the MDT approve the study to be conducted by a consulting firm.

The Full Transportation Study will aim to address build out in Big Sky. It should take one year to complete and will come with recommendations for projects and solutions based on five, ten, and fifteen year timeframes. If approved, all future projects on MDT roads would be eligible to be added to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). The STIP operates on a five-year timeline and is updated annually. You can view the current Montana STIP at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stip.shtml>.

In order to create an efficient transportation plan, Big Sky will need more funding than what can currently be added to property tax bills or collected through Road Improvement Districts. The community must work with both Madison and Gallatin counties and the Montana Department of Transportation to create a long-term transportation plan that will make Big Sky's transportation system more safe and efficient for all parties.

For more information on Big Sky's transportation plan, please contact Kitty Clemens at the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce at 406-995-3000 or info@bigskychamber.com. The Big Sky Transportation Report is available on the Big Sky Chamber's website at <http://bigskychamber.com/news/transportation/>. To learn more about Western Transportation Institute, visit <http://www.westerntransportationinstitute.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 and 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.