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For Immediate Release:

DestinationNEXT Workshop in Big Sky, Montana Highlights Need for Tourism Master Plan for Big Sky

Big Sky remains a developing destination with opportunity for more community engagement and support

Big Sky, Montana | December 2, 2016 – With grant funding from the Montana Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Trust Fund, the Big Sky Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB) and Prospera Business Network recently conducted a survey and corresponding workshop to determine the level of community support for the travel and tourism industry in Big Sky.

Paul Ouimet, Destination Marketing Association International’s (DMAI) Managing Director of DestinationNEXT and CEO of NEXTFactor Enterprises Inc. presented the survey’s results to several community members and the Chamber of Commerce/CVB staff on November 22nd. With strong global competition and visitors’ demand for authentic, local and unique experiences, the results were presented in a model that included comparisons to other destinations and a path for growth moving forward.

“We learned from the survey that Big Sky is a developing destination with many strengths and an opportunity to grow our community support and engagement to better support a comprehensive community brand,” explained Britt Ide, Interim CEO of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce/CVB.

The online survey was sent to 115 industry professionals consisting of Chamber staff and board of directors, community leaders, Chamber members, and bureau partners/stakeholders. The nearly 70% response rate highlighted the interest in the questions contained in the survey, and provided a complete data set on which the DestinationNEXT team could assess the results. Unlike many destinations, Mr. Ouimet explained that Big Sky's survey responses were notably consistent, resulting in a clear picture of strengths and opportunities moving forward.

The workshop highlighted the need for a comprehensive Tourism Master Plan to realize the benefits of Big Sky's tourism vision and work to keep the community and marketplace engagement fresh and relevant. With phase one of the overall project now complete, the next steps will focus on capitalizing on transformational opportunities to improve community support and engagement as well as the strength of the destination. The workshop identified three key strategic questions to focus on: Workforce Development (including housing), Infrastructure (transportation, Wi-Fi, water and sewer) and Regional Collaboration and Advocacy.

"We are grateful for the funding to allow us to focus on these important questions at this time," Ms. Ide stated, "and look forward to the work to come towards our goal of a Tourism Master Plan to improve visitor experience and increase visitation to Big Sky."

For additional information about Visit Big Sky or DestinationNEXT, contact Alex Mansfield, Visit Big Sky's Marketing Manager, at 406-995-3000 or at alex@bigskychamber.com. To learn more about Prospera Business Network, visit <https://www.prosperabusinessnetwork.org/>. To read about DMAI's DestinationNEXT, visit <https://www.destinationmarketing.org/destinationnext>.

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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 administered by Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development lodging tax funds and collects private industry investments from business partners for public relations and advertising programs.