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New Partner Projects Fund program announced by Big Sky Country NHA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TO: NEWS MEDIA OUTLETS

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GREAT FALLS -- The nonprofit Big Sky Country National Heritage Area has announced the Partner Project Fund, a program to assist community groups that are working to renovate historic structures, improve historic sites, develop educational programs, boost heritage tourism and more.

Projects must be located in Cascade County or a portion of Chouteau County where the heritage area is to be located. In this initial round, Partner Project Funds from \$500 to \$1,000 each will be awarded up to a total of \$5,000, after requests for funds are evaluated by the group.

An application package is available from the group's website at www.bigskycountrynha.org; or applicants can request an application packet by writing P.O. Box 1323, Great Falls, MT 59403, or by sending a request via email to info@bigskycountrynha.org.

"We're very excited about this new program, and we will begin accepting applications immediately," said Jane Weber, chair of the Big Sky Country National Heritage Area and a former Cascade County commissioner. "The heritage area aims to enhance local communities and boost the area's economy, and we appreciate all the support we have received from thoughtful folks throughout the region."

The heritage area will submit a feasibility study to the National Park Service in 2021; action by Congress on the proposal is expected in the next several years. Congress has the final say.

Officials from the heritage area group will announce approval of Partner Project Funds in the coming weeks and months.

Efforts by community volunteers to create a national heritage area in central Montana began in earnest half a decade ago. To donate to the Big Sky Country National Heritage Area, go to the group's website or Facebook page. Personal checks and all major credit cards are accepted. For more information or to offer any questions or concerns, write the Big Sky Country National Heritage Area, P.O. Box 1323, Great Falls MT 59403. The organization is a 501 (c)(3) private nonprofit.

(More Partner Project fund program details are listed below.)

(MORE INFORMATION:)

According to a news release, Partner Project Funds can be used for:

- Projects relating to heritage tourism and economic development related to history, culture, arts, natural history, and recreation; interpretation and education programs at schools, museums, or other organizations/events/activities; historic preservation, to include stabilization/preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of historic properties or cultural landscapes. Projects

must connect with the BSCNHA's mission and/or themes and be located within the project area of Cascade County and a portion of Chouteau County.

- Consultant expenses (travel, lodging, fees) directly related to the project.
- Marketing efforts related to the project.
- Supplies that will be used for the project.
- Rental of equipment.

Partner Project Funds cannot be used for:

- Individual scholarships, fellowships, research, or non-project/conference travel.
- Programs which advocate social or political action.
- Programs that focus on providing social services.
- Fundraising activities.
- Operational expenses or durable goods and equipment, including computers and computer software.
- Website hosting, domain name, and insurance.
- Courses for academic credit.
- Any expenses incurred prior to the partner project fund award.
- Projects that discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, age, or physical abilities.

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