

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NORDIC EVENTS AND TRAINING CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY RELEASED
Project in the Seeley Lake area would benefit the entire region

Seeley Lake, MT May 25, 2011

The Missoula Area Economic Development Corporation (MAEDC), Montana Department of Commerce, and the Bitterroot Economic Development District (BREDD), in cooperation with the Seeley Lake Nordic Challenge Steering Committee and, commissioned Morton Trails and CTA Group to prepare a Seeley Lake Nordic Skiing and Training Events Center Feasibility Study. The report, which can be accessed at www.seeleylakenordic.org, is a first step in consideration of a Nordic-based community investment. It offers a comprehensive analysis of opportunities and resources, and provides project development recommendations.

Consultants confirm that Seeley Lake has great potential for becoming a top notch Nordic destination. The region's unique combination of great snow conditions and rolling terrain, combined with demonstrated community support for economic development opportunities, make this an exciting and worthy project, with strong potential to add tremendous value to the area.

The Feasibility Study identifies several options including a racecourse meeting national certification standards could be developed and various trail configuration. A certified racecourse, along with expanded recreational opportunities, could increase the attention of Nordic skiers – including both local winter sports enthusiasts and out-of-state tourists. Capitalizing on these opportunities would add stability and diversification to the region's winter economy.

The 78 page Feasibility Study includes descriptions of the economic drivers in the Seeley Lake community. Great attention and review is given to the current economic base, and its potential for development and job growth, with mindfulness regarding maintaining the region's character and values.

According to the Study, a Nordic Trail System may create many benefits for the region. Increased tourism, stemming from both specific events and general trail use, can bring revenue to the region through food, lodging, user fees, and other spending. The community will benefit from strengthened organizations and enhanced community pride. Additional benefits could include job creation, regional wealth transfer (as

Missoula and surrounding residents travel to Seeley for Nordic trail use), and enhanced real estate values. Estimated visitors to a Seeley Nordic system range from 10,000 to 50,000 annually. Economic benefits will not be limited to the Seeley community – Missoula and other surrounding communities will also likely benefit from increased tourism and visitation.

Other useful information in the study includes: options and explanations for various racecourse configurations and events; added benefits to local hospitality and retail businesses; suggestions for enhancing the school ski programs; analysis of similar projects throughout the country; and organization structure recommendations. Projected cost estimates for various options are included in the report.

The Nordic Challenge Steering Committee will present the Feasibility Study findings at Seeley Lake Elementary School, Seeley Lake, MT May 26th, at 6:00 pm.

Funding for the Feasibility Study came from both the State Department of Commerce (\$15,000) and the Seeley Lake community (\$10,000 in donations). Community members will use the information in the Study to develop both an immediate action plan and a long-term vision to promote and develop a Seeley Lake Nordic Skiing and Training Events Center. For more information, contact Marcy Allen at BREDD, 406-258-3435 or visit www.seeeylakenordic.org.

About BREDD, Inc

The mission of the Bitter Root Economic Development District, Inc. is to accelerate the conservation, development, and utilization of natural and human resources to improve the level of economic activity, and to enhance environment, quality of life and standard of living in Mineral, Missoula and Ravalli Counties, Montana. BREDD, Inc receives funding for our work from Regional Partners and U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

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