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Jim Schaefer, Executive Director**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Submitted by Jim Schaefer

Custer Country Montana will be holding its 24th Annual Membership meeting on Sept. 20, 2007 at the Forsyth Country Club in Forsyth, MT. The meeting starts at 10:30 AM.

Custer Country is Montana's largest tourism region, covering approximately 34,000 square miles in the state's southeast corner. The region includes 13 counties, the Cheyenne and Crow nations and the state's largest city, Billings.

The meeting is an opportunity for members and those who advertise in the Custer Country Vacation Guide to vote for board members and learn what's new for the coming year and to hear a recap of the previous year's activities. All advertisers and paid up members will be treated to a great meal catered by the Forsyth Country Club staff.

The guest speaker this year will be Chas Van Genderen, Assistant Manager of Parks for Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. He will be updating the members on the progress that is being made in such FWP programs as Block Management, State Park acquisitions and improvements scheduled for existing State Parks in Custer Country.

Custer Country President Rose Emily Longan, of Roundup, will give her annual report to the membership, as will Executive Director Jim Schaefer.

The tourism region is host to nearly 25% of the 10 million visitors who come to Montana each year. Hotels, motels, restaurants, gas stations and retail stores all benefit from the \$2 billion visitors spend in the state each year.

Custer Country's mission is to "enhance economic development in the region through tourism," and undertakes several important projects to reach that goal. The 132-page Custer Country Vacation Guide is distributed to 130,000 visitors each year and is the most extensive regional guide in the state. Consumer Ads are purchased in several national publications including Reader's Digest and Good Housekeeping and Custer Country's newly-redesigned web site at CusterCountry.com receives over 1 million visits a year

The most recent major project completed by Custer Country is *Southeast Montana's Custer Country Birding Trail Map*, a glossy, large-format publication that guides birdwatchers to some of the best places in the region to view and photograph the vast number of avian species that call Custer Country home.

Those interested in increasing the benefits of tourism in southeast Montana are welcome to attend the Custer Country Annual Membership meeting on Sept. 20, 2007. For more information, call the Custer Country office at 406-346-1876.