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NEWS RELEASE

May 6, 2009

Contact: William Marcus, director, Broadcast Media Center, 406-243-4154.

'BACKROADS OF MONTANA' IS COMIN' ROUND THE MOUNTAIN

MISSOULA -

“Backroads of Montana,” the popular travelogue series on Montana PBS, presents its 30th episode – and the first in high definition (where available) – at 8 p.m. Monday, May 11,

The episode will repeat at 7 p.m., Thursday, May 14; at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, May 16; and at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, May 17.

Subtitled “Comin’ Round the Mountain,” the program climbs aboard one of the famous “jammer” buses in **Glacier National Park**, observes the spring snowmelt near Lolo Peak, listens in to a ham radio operation with some space-age credentials, and joins an archaeology dig for Chinese artifacts in **Big Timber**.

Producer Gus Chambers interviewed 79-year-old jammer driver Joe Kendall, who returns to Glacier National Park each summer to help visitors fall in love with the area’s scenic beauty. The grandeur of Glacier drew Kendall to the park in 1949. He worked only one summer for a park concessionaire but never forgot his “second home.” After 50 years of farming in his home state of Illinois, he decided to give a job at Glacier a second chance.

The program then follows the cycle of nature with a visual essay on the spring snowmelt. Photographer John Twiggs went to the Lolo Peak area south of Missoula and chronicled the transformation of snow fields into rushing creeks.

Producer Ray Ekness interviewed **Frenchtown** ham radio operator Lance Collister. Ekness watched as Collister aimed his ham radio antenna at the moon – a process called a “moon bounce.” Collister has used the technique to communicate with people around the world from his basement “ham shack.”

The final story, produced by Twiggs, profiles a researcher who returned to his hometown of Big Timber in hopes of adding to the archaeological records of the Chinese in Montana. Big Timber was home to a community of Chinese immigrants in the early 20th century. Justin Moschelle had heard stories about their fate and wanted to see what evidence lived to re-tell their story.

William Marcus hosts the program on location from the historic **Stevensville** area in the Bitterroot Valley of southwestern Montana, with stops at Fort Owen, St. Mary’s Mission, the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge and Valley Drug.

“Backroads of Montana” is a production of Montana PBS, a collaborative effort of The University of Montana and Montana State University. Check local listings for channels.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: For high-resolution photographs, visit <http://www.montanapbs.org/BackroadsofMontana/episode130/pressroom/>.

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