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Media Contacts:

Christie Rosckes, Discover Stillwater, 651-351-1717, info@discoverstillwater.com, Twitter @MNBirthplace
Alyssa Ebel, Explore Minnesota, 651-757-1857, alyssa.ebel@state.mn.us, Twitter: @ExploreMN_PR

Photo Attached. Credit: DiscoverStillwater.com



Explore Minnesota Through Statewide Winter Scavenger Hunt
Stillwater Selected As One of 10 'Checkpoint MN' Hosts

Stillwater, Minn. (Dec. 3, 2015) – For the third consecutive year, Explore Minnesota, the state’s tourism promotion office, in partnership with Minneapolis-based marketing agency Monopoint Media, will launch a statewide winter scavenger hunt this Thursday, Dec. 3. Coined “**Checkpoint MN,**” the event highlights 10 iconic travel destinations in

Minnesota this winter season, including **Stillwater, the Birthplace of Minnesota**. The scavenger hunt runs **December 3 through January 31, 2016**, aiming to entice thousands of Minnesota travelers over the course of 8 weeks with \$35,000+ in prizes, including winter gear, *Wigwam Socks*, *MN getaways*, *grand prize ski, snowboard, and fat bike packages from The-House.com*, and more.

Stillwater was chosen as a location to host one of the checkpoints. The checkpoint sign will be installed at the **gazebo in Lowell Park** just north of the historic Lift Bridge in downtown Stillwater. The beauty of the National Scenic St. Croix River and the Main Street which is on the National Historic Register are a delight during the winter season. Stop at this checkpoint, then enjoy shopping, dining, breweries, wineries, art galleries, and cozy inns. Plan your visit at DiscoverStillwater.com and take advantage of the Stillwater coupons on CheckpointMN.com. For those adventurers looking for more challenge, find the four sets of historic stairs throughout downtown to hike to more great views of this historic river town on the Minnesota/Wisconsin border.

Checkpoint MN locations include a variety of sites that embody winter travel in Minnesota including: a 218,000 acre national park to celebrate the 2016 National Park Service Centennial Celebration, Minnesota’s newest outdoor sports stadium, the country’s second oldest brewery, and more. CheckpointMN.com features a map of the checkpoints, complete prize descriptions, rules and sponsorship details, participant photos, and travel information about each checkpoint, so you can make the most out of checking in at each destination. The 10 checkpoints can be found at:

- Voyageurs National Park, Rainy Lake Visitors Center, International Falls
- World’s Largest Free Standing Hockey Stick & Puck, Eveleth
- Lowell Park, Stillwater
- TCF Bank Stadium, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
- August Schell Brewing Company, New Ulm
- Zumbrota Covered Bridge, Zumbrota
- Mille Lacs Kathio State Park, Onamia
- Hopperstad Stave Church at the Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead
- Cuyuna State Recreation Area, Crosby-Ironton

- Arctic Cat, Inc., Thief River Falls

"Minnesota is a one-of-a-kind winter travel destination. Visitors can venture outdoors with numerous activities at our beautiful regional, state and national parks, catch a game, tour a museum or take a brewcation," said John Edman, director of Explore Minnesota. "Each checkpoint destination offers a unique experience that can be found only in Minnesota this season. The checkpoints are a simple addition to a planned winter vacation, or good excuse to plan new trips around them."

Share Sights on Social Media Using #OnlyinMN and #CheckpointMN

Participants are encouraged to follow Explore Minnesota and CheckpointMN on social media, and share their **#OnlyinMN** winter experiences on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest for a chance to win prizes. This allows for you to be involved in real-time and not only share your traveling adventures but your prizes! Participants can also use **#CheckpointMN**.

"Research shows that people seek travel inspiration from their social networks, so sharing iconic Minnesota sights using #OnlyinMN and #CheckpointMN is a great way to showcase the state," added Edman.

Minnesota Sets Standard for Statewide Winter Scavenger Hunts

Minnesota is the only state to promote a winter tourism-themed scavenger hunt that encompasses a variety of destinations and attractions statewide. In recent years, Checkpoint MN has yielded thousands of eager participants and nationwide media attention, adding Minnesota to the map as a leading winter travel getaway. This year, Checkpoint MN aims to secure spontaneous adventurers, cultural explorers and seasoned travel veterans to show off one-of-a-kind Minnesota winter travel experiences.

Checkpoint MN Rules and Prizes

Each participant automatically earns a prize by reaching their first checkpoint. Participants can earn more prizes the more places they check in. A complete list of rules and prize structure can be found at CheckpointMN.com.

"There are thousands of dollars' worth of prizes to coax people out of hibernation, and each Checkpoint MN participant gets something great." said Stephen Regenold, a partner at Monopoint Media and editor and founder of GearJunkie.com. "On their adventure, people get to see some of the most iconic places Minnesota has to offer."

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About Monopoint Media

Monopoint Media LLC, founded in 2006, is a creative agency focused on outdoor, sports and active lifestyle brands. The company (MonopointMedia.com) is based in Minneapolis and works with brands to build video, stories, microsites, social media projects and custom events. Monopoint Media owns and operates GearJunkie.com, a top publication in the outdoor-adventure world.

About Explore Minnesota

As the state's tourism promotion office, Explore Minnesota markets Minnesota as a premier travel destination and pursues an entrepreneurial approach, leveraging the state's tourism investment with increased involvement by the private sector. A council of representatives from the state's tourism industry strongly connects Explore Minnesota with tourism businesses and organizations.

Tourism is a \$13 billion industry in Minnesota, and a key sector of the state's economy. Winter travel in Minnesota is a big business and accounts for 24% of annual travel expenditures. The leisure and hospitality industry – a major provider of tourism services – employs more than 250,000 workers, representing 11 percent of Minnesota's private sector employment. Leisure and hospitality also generates 17 percent of the state's sales tax revenues. An estimated 69 million domestic travelers and 270,000

international travelers vacationed in Minnesota in 2013. These figures do not include the 700,000 Canadian travelers who visit Minnesota annually.

See what's happening right now, only in Minnesota, at exploreminnesota.com, and join the movement via @exploreminn on Twitter and Pinterest, or @exploreminnesota on Instagram and Facebook, using #OnlyinMN.

