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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 13, 2014

Lake County ORV Tourism Grant Project Awarded to Bit Social Media

Cadillac, MI, October 13, 2014– Bit Social Media has won the bid to develop a comprehensive branding and marketing plan for Lake County tourism. A \$45,000 grant was recently awarded to the county from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s rural development division to be used for promotion of ORV trails and recreational tourism in Lake County.

The grant money will be focused specifically on re-branding Lake County as the premiere off-road vehicle destination in Michigan. Bit Social Media has been contracted to build a new website, manage targeted digital advertising and coordinate extensive social media efforts aimed at ORV enthusiasts in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Ontario, and Michigan.

Bit Social Media will be collaborating with a new committee, headed by county commissioner Dan Sloan, formed to oversee the distribution of the funds and organize a marketing and online advertising campaign for the county. The committee is comprised of several local business owners and members of business promoting county groups.

Lindsey Westdorp and Will McConnell, owners of Bit Social Media, are confident this funding will be enough for Lake County to “make a splash” online and draw new visitors to the area. “We’re excited to begin working with area residents and business owners to help share their well kept secret of high quality trail systems and many outdoor recreational

opportunities. Our goal is to connect with outdoor-loving tourists throughout the Midwest and show them exactly what Lake County has to offer,” said Westdorp.

Also in the works is a new mobile app that will aid tourists and ORV enthusiasts when they are out on the trails. “Our app will map all of the trail systems, but it will also feature hotels, restaurants, campgrounds, and other points of interest throughout the county,” said McConnell.

“I’ve been a business owner here since 1980, and it’s pretty evident that tourism is really important to the local economy,” committee member Jim Faiella told the Lake County Star. “We’ve got a great resource here with our trails and any money we spend on advertising the county will be money well-spent.”

These marketing dollars will be spent over the next 18 months but could lead to a more permanent advertising platform that is funded for years to come. “We have over 300 miles of ORV trails in the county. If we can get that out, we know we are going to draw a lot of tourists. That’s going to protect our existing jobs and lead to more employment to the county,” explained third district county commissioner, and committee overseer Dan Sloan. “If this is successful, after the first year and a half we can move to a full year, four season promotion of Lake County’s tourist industry. This means moving beyond ORV promotion, and into fishing, cross country skiing, Blessing of the Bikes, everything,” said Sloan.

While dozens of counties applied for this grant, only a handful, including Lake County, were chosen. The county boasts 800 miles of trails, 300 of which are designated for ORV use. The marketing campaign is slated to roll out early next year, but work has already begun, according to Sloan.

Established in 2011, Bit Social Media offers web design, SEO, and complete social media services to over 100 businesses and organizations throughout Michigan. Located in downtown Cadillac, they can also be found online at www.bitsocialmedia.com.

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