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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Land of Sky Regional Council Awarded Three Innovation Awards by the National Association of Development Organizations

WASHINGTON, DC – Land of Sky Regional Council Chair and Black Mountain Alderman, Larry B. Harris, is announcing that Land of Sky Regional Council has been awarded three (3) Innovation Awards from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) based in Washington, DC. Each year, the Innovation Awards program honors NADO members for their creative approaches to advancing regional community and economic development and improved quality of life. These projects have made significant impacts on their regions and demonstrate the diversity of services and program delivery provided by regional development organizations across the country.

The project winners include R.I.D.E., Backpacks to Briefcases B2B, and Community Led Fall Prevention.

R.I.D.E. stands for Ridership Independence for the Disabled and Elderly. It is a program coordinated by Mountain Mobility to afford Buncombe County's disabled and elderly citizens the opportunity for increased independence by offering a discount for use with various taxi and paratransit companies in the county. The program targets elderly and ADA-certified individuals who, due to a disability, are unable to travel on Asheville Transit or on Mountain Mobility buses.

Backpacks to Briefcases, or B2B, helps 2016 and prior college graduates from four- and two-year colleges and universities secure professional internships that may lead to permanent employment opportunities. B2B creates a new pathway to help recent graduates find employment opportunities that will take advantage of their earned degrees and keep them in WNC. There are almost 40 local businesses and organizations participating in B2B as a potential host offering over 60 internships.

Community Led Fall Prevention initiatives strive to reduce the number of falls and fall-related injuries in Western North Carolina. The WNC Fall Prevention Coalition is comprised of representatives from over 30 regional organizations. Together, they address the need for coordinated and multifactorial fall prevention strategies in WNC through community awareness, provider education and a balance and screening referral process. Research shows that 60-75% of falls can be prevented which is the goal of this program.

Land of Sky Regional Council is a multi-county, local government, planning and development organization. The Council serves the counties of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania by providing technical assistance to local governments and administering projects and programs that benefit our region's citizens.

Based in Washington, DC, NADO provides advocacy, education, research and training services for the nation's regional development organizations.

For more information on NADO, visit their website www.nado.org. For more on Land of Sky Regional Council, call 828.251.6622 or visit their website at www.landofsky.org.

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