A Grand Celebration of the American West opens September 25, 2015, at the Berkshire Museum

[Pittsfield, Mass.] – Experience the magnificent, intriguing, and ever-changing American West in compelling photographs and fascinating objects when American West, a dual exhibition, opens at the Berkshire Museum on Friday, September 25, 2015. The travelling exhibition National Geographic Greatest Photographs of the American West features stunning photography from the last 125 years. Go West, organized by the Museum’s staff, includes objects, artwork, and interactive stations pertaining to the grand adventure of the American West. The pair of exhibitions will be on view Saturday, September 26, 2015, through Sunday, January 3, 2016. American West is generously sponsored by MountainOne and by Marita and David Glodt.

American West Preview Party takes place Friday, September 25, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., and is open to the public; tickets are $10 adult, $5 child, and free for Museum members.

National Geographic Greatest Photographs of the American West
Featuring the best images of the West published by the iconic magazine since 1889, National Geographic Greatest Photographs of the American West includes works by more than 50 different photographers. Many of the images are instantly recognizable for their subjects; others less so. Arrayed together, they tell a story about imagination, spectacle, adventure, and surpassing beauty, together with startling views into the daily struggles of people and animals in a vast and often intimidating territory.
Wide open spaces, spectacular rock formations, and the cowboy life are on view alongside struggles for limited natural resources, Native American cultural continuity, and new energy sources. The images shown in this exhibition offer a broad understanding of a region that has long captivated photographers.

National Geographic Greatest Photographs of the American West was organized with the National Museum of Wildlife Art of the United States and Museums West; presented by the Mays Family Foundation; traveled by National Geographic.

Go West
Thinking of the American West evokes iconic images: the tough American cowboys driving cattle across wild, open prairie; the great stagecoaches that transported mail, passengers, and freight; herds of burly American bison. Go West includes mementos celebrating the rodeo tradition, from costumes and belt buckles to a champion’s saddle; Audubon prints illustrating the story of prairie dogs and the elusive black-footed ferrets; and a bison skeleton that demonstrates the scale and presence of the animal. Live rattlesnakes and a live gila monster are part of the exhibition, reminding visitors of the importance of wildlife to the experience of the American West. Just for fun, a newly-built covered wagon invites children and families to climb aboard and take photos, dressed in period costumes.

Together, these two exhibitions form a story about the American West that is as forward-looking as it is a glance back to a time that has been romanticized. This celebration of the American West acknowledges the challenges and harsh conditions, high adventure and magnificent terrain that were - and are - part of this compelling component of our national identity.

About the Berkshire Museum
Located in downtown Pittsfield, Massachusetts, at 39 South St., the Berkshire Museum, a Smithsonian Affiliate, is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is $13 adult, $6 child; Museum members and
children age 3 and under enjoy free admission. For more information, visit www.berkshiremuseum.org or call 413.443.7171.

In association with the Smithsonian since 2013, Berkshire Museum is part of a select group of museums, cultural, educational, and arts organizations that share the Smithsonian's resources with the nation. Established by Zenas Crane in 1903, Berkshire Museum integrates art, history, and natural science in a wide range of programs and exhibitions that inspire educational connections between the disciplines. Little Cinema is open year-round. Feigenbaum Hall of Innovation, Worlds in Miniature, Aquarium, and other exhibits are ongoing.

**About National Geographic Traveling Exhibitions**

National Geographic is a global nonprofit membership organization driven by a passionate belief in the power of science, exploration and storytelling to change the world. It funds hundreds of research and conservation projects around the globe each year. With the support of its members and donors, National Geographic works to inspire, illuminate and teach through scientific expeditions, award-winning journalism, education initiatives and more. It is one of the world’s leading organizers of large-scale, traveling exhibitions. Since launching “Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs” in 2004, National Geographic has organized two more Egyptian-themed exhibitions, “Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs” and “Cleopatra: The Search for the Last Queen of Egypt.” Other traveling exhibitions include “Indiana Jones and the Adventure of Archaeology,” “Birds of Paradise: Amazing Avian Evolution,” “Women of Vision: National Geographic Photographers on Assignment” and “Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul.” Since 2009, National Geographic traveling exhibitions have been seen by more than 35 million visitors.

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