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The Big Sky Graces the Big Screen in Major Motion Picture

-- New Line Cinema, a division of Warner Brothers, features Glacier National Park and the Blackfeet Reservation in "My Sisters Keeper" scheduled for release in 2009 --

(HELENA) — Montana's unparalleled scenic beauty will feature prominently in a key scene for the major studio film "*My Sister's Keeper*" directed by Nick Cassavetes, whose previous credits include the 2004 award winner "*The Notebook*".

"We're excited to share our spectacular backyard with the world in a major Hollywood film. We are working hard to make Montana a top tier film destination with an excellent reputation among those in the industry," Governor Schweitzer said. "Coupled with Montana's extraordinary locations and well skilled workforce, Montana's Big Sky on the Big Screen tax incentives aspire to provide an added enticement to film in Big Sky Country."

The production was primarily shot in Los Angeles, however several essential scenes were filmed recently in northwest Montana. The week-long shoot employed approximately 60 crew members, mostly Montanans from the Flathead Valley, Blackfeet Reservation and Bozeman area.

"The impact Montana's film industry has on our local and statewide economies cannot be overstated," said Anthony Preite, director of the Montana Department of Commerce. "While the economic impact for this production is not yet available, large productions of this size typically spend over \$100,000 per day of filming on Montana labor and support services. We would anticipate a direct economic impact of \$225,000 which means a total economic impact of \$345,000, all in just a few short days."

The Montana Film Office has been working diligently with the production team since December 2007 to bring this film to Montana. Film Office staffer John Ansotegui has worked closely with the National Park Service and the production company location manager, Alasdair Boyd to choose the ideal location for the shoot.

"We had a fantastic experience filming in Montana" said executive producer Diana Pokorny. "The scenery was magnificent, the local crew was experienced and accommodating and the Montana Film Office was present and helpful in every aspect of the experience."

Both the Montana Film Office and the production company were very appreciative of the cooperative spirit demonstrated by the Glacier National Park officials throughout the process. All those involved worked meticulously to create solutions amenable to everyone's needs while first and foremost protecting the Park's natural resources.

Based on a novel by Jodi Piccoult "My Sister's Keeper" tells the story of a young girl named Anna Fitzgerald, played by 2007 Oscar nominee Abigail Breslin, who was conceived as a bone marrow match for her sister with leukemia. It explores the moral and ethical complexities of genetic selection, family loyalties and personal rights. The movie also stars four-time Golden Globe nominee Cameron Diaz ("*Charlies Angel's*", "*Shrek*") Oscar nominee and 2008 Emmy winner Alec Baldwin ("*30 Rock*", "*The Cooler*") and Oscar nominee Joan Cusack ("*In & Out*", "*Working Girl*").

In addition to Emmy winning executive producer Pokorny, other members of the production team include screenwriter Jeremy Leven and Oscar winning producer, Mark Johnson.

In 2007, the Montana State Legislature passed a measure to improve the already successful Big Sky on the Big Screen Act, spearheaded by Governor Brian Schweitzer. The new tax incentive package provides film companies larger tax incentives on production expenditures incurred while on location in Montana, and encourages large scale productions by eliminating a cap on the credits.

Production companies are given a 14 percent incentive rebate on all Montana labor hired for film production and a nine percent rebate on all production-related Montana expenditures including lodging, equipment rental, fuel, lumber, and construction materials.

The Big Sky on the Big Screen Act helped increase film production in Montana by 34 percent between 2005 and 2006. The economic impact created by film production in Montana increased by 12 percent between 2006 and 2007.

In 2007, 86 film and television projects were shot in Montana, including three feature films. Overall these projects generated \$7.8 million in film production spending and created 202 full time jobs for Montanans.

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