**Sample Press Release**

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*or include name, address, and phone number of organization at top of release*}

**For Immediate Release**

**THE [SPONSORING ORGANIZATION] HOSTS MONTANA CONVERSATION “OUR RURAL URBAN POLITICAL DIVIDE” WITH ROB SALDIN**

[City–date]

The [sponsoring organization] hosts Montana Conversation “Our Rural Urban Political Divide” with Rob Saldin on [date of program]. The program is at [location and time of program]. The presentation is free and open to the public. Funding for Montana Conversations is provided by Humanities Montana through grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Montana’s Cultural Trust, and private donations. We are funded in part by coal severance taxes paid based upon coal mined in Montana and deposited in Montana’s cultural and aesthetic projects trust fund.

For most voters, localized considerations now take a back seat—if they have a seat at all—to nationalized considerations that have come to fully define partisan attachments. The way Americans feel about their president now determines how they feel about their Senator, their U.S. House member, and even their state legislator. This dynamic has led Democrats to prosper in urban centers but crater in rural areas while Republicans have become nearly extinct in cities even as they thriving in rural America. In and of itself, there is nothing surprising or even necessarily concerning about urbanites and rural folks having political differences. However, it becomes problematic when a team mentality takes hold and comes to dictate “who we are” in a more fundamental sense and enters apolitical spaces such as the vehicles we drive, the beer we drink, and even the public health protocols that we do or don’t follow. Montana offers a prime example of Democrats’ collapse in rural America. This once proudly independent state was overtaken by a red wave in 2020 fueled by overwhelming GOP margins in rural counties. Yet Big Sky Country’s recent history also suggests a path for a return to Democratic competitiveness, both in Montana and in rural areas more generally. That development—along with a stronger Republican presence in urban areas—would provide the foundation for healthier politics.

Rob Saldin is the director of The Mansfield Center’s Ethics and Public Affairs Program and a professor of political science at the University of Montana. He is also a senior fellow at The Niskanen Center—a Washington, D.C. think tank—and a political analyst for Montana Public Radio. The author of three books and many scholarly journal articles, Saldin is also a frequent contributor to the popular press and has written for The Atlantic, The New York Times, and The Washington Post, among others. His family has been in Montana for four generations, primarily along the Hi-Line and in Missoula.

For more information, please call [sponsoring organization] at [phone number].

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Contact person: [project organizer and phone number]