For Immediate Release

Estes Park, CO – May 6, 2015

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**Estes Park Businesses Working Together to Attract More Wellness Travelers**

More than 150 Estes Park business owners gathered at the Stanley Hotel last week for the Estes Park Wellness Summit to learn about the growing wellness tourism industry. Spurred by recent plans to build a $30 million state-of-the-art wellness complex, a joint project of the Estes Park Medical Center and Stanley Hotel owner Grand Heritage Hotel Group, the event was designed to increase local awareness of the opportunities presented by the multi-trillion-dollar travel sector. The two-day event featured Internationally-recognized wellness tourism expert Camille Hoheb, who presented the keynote “Wellness & Travel: Two Major Trends, One Hot Commodity” and facilitated five industry-specific breakout sessions.

One of the common revelations during the event was that even though wellness travel is a relatively new tourism sector, Estes Park currently has a lot to offer the wellness traveler and has been serving this type of guest for more than 100 years. As wellness and experiential travel have grown in popularity, Visit Estes Park, the community’s destination marketing organization, has been working to grow awareness of Estes Park’s wellness, fitness, and recreational experiences.

“A major priority for Visit Estes Park is to develop the destination’s tourism product selection,” said Elizabeth Fogarty, President and CEO of Visit Estes Park. “Estes Park will need to continue to seize opportunities for new and enhanced guest experiences, such as those presented by wellness tourism, in order to remain competitive going forward.”

At the Wellness Summit, business owners shared successes they’ve achieved through partnerships to serve clientele interested in well-being and healthy, active pursuits. They also brainstormed new opportunities and discussed what the community needs in order to truly become an internationally-recognized wellness destination. Working to complement the new wellness center, both directly and indirectly, will cultivate a healthy guest experience throughout Estes Park.

“The enthusiasm from the business community and representation from so many types of companies was exciting to see,” said Brian Herwig, Estes Park Medical Center CEO. “The on-going efforts to build a community culture of wellness, dovetails beautifully with wellness initiatives and partnerships we’ve been working on with local businesses, other local healthcare providers, the school district and our own employees.”

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The Estes Park Medical Center’s new 19,000-square-foot Wellness Center, to be built in 2016, will be a hub for future Estes Park wellness travel offerings. The Wellness Center will provide health and lifestyle transformation retreats that engage guests in personalized programs based on their health goals, cutting-edge medical assessments and techniques proven effective through scientific research. With a whole-person and lifestyle approach, each individual will be helped to meet their goals around physical fitness, metabolic fitness, diet and nutrition, weight management, stress management, sleep issues or other individual health concerns. Grand Heritage Hotel Group, owner and operator of The Stanley Hotel, will own and operate the five-star hospitality component physically connected to the Wellness Center to integrate lodging accommodations, spa services, food and beverage, and resort amenities.

“There are few places in the world that can compete with Estes Park when it comes to scenic beauty and outdoor recreation.  Now that we’re combining our natural resources with the resources of our business community, Estes Park is poised to be the wellness tourism capital of Colorado and beyond,” said Reed Rowley, Grand Heritage Hotel Group Vice President of Business Development.

Leaders from the various entities that formed the steering committee for the Wellness Summit will be reconvening to discuss the ideas and opportunities that surfaced, and how each partner organization can continue work with their constituent groups to develop the most viable suggestions.

The Wellness Summit was sponsored by the Estes Park Medical Center, Estes Park Economic Development Corporation, Visit Estes Park, Estes Valley Partners for Commerce, Estes Area Lodging Association and The Stanley Hotel. In addition to the sponsors, the Summit’s steering committee also included representatives from the Estes Park Wedding Association, Restaurant Partners, Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Valley Recreation and Park District, and several independent business owners.

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**About The Estes Park Medical Center**

The Estes Park Medical Center (EPMC) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting wellness and providing the highest-level of quality healthcare. We believe there are seven essential dimensions to wellness – emotional, environmental, intellectual, occupational, physical, social and spiritual. That philosophy combined with our inspirational mountain environment and modern understanding of medicine can transform lives, improve health and increase athletic performance. EMPC will own and operate the Estes Park Wellness Center, a 19,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art wellness facility to be built in 2016 on the grounds of the historic Stanley Hotel.

The EPMC campus includes a 25-bed critical access hospital with a 24-hour emergency department, a 60-bed skilled nursing facility that serves immediate and skilled healthcare needs, and a 14-physician medical practice. In addition, 24-hour Advanced Life Support Ambulance Service, medical/surgical services, obstetrics, a specialty clinic, orthopedics, sports medicine, and home health and hospice services are provided. EPMC has served the Estes Valley and surrounding areas since 1975, and is designated as a Level IV Trauma Center.  www.epmedcenter.com.

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**About The Estes Park Economic Development Corporation**

The Estes Park EDC formed in August 2013 due to the recognized need for a sustained, systemic economic development effort for the Estes Valley and surrounding region. Economic development is an important component of the quality of life for all residents.

The Colorado floods of September 2013 caused the Estes Park EDC to focus initial efforts on supporting existing businesses. By June of 2014, in partnership with the Larimer SBDC, more than 80 businesses had assisted with the Recover Colorado business grant program when fewer than 200 businesses had applied for the program statewide. www.estesparkedc.com

**About Visit Estes Park**

Whether it is the first or 100th visit to Estes Park for a guest, each time here should be magical and memorable - unlike any other destination. Visit Estes Park works with local, regional and national partners to identify, communicate and provide the experiences that make Estes Park a one-of-a-kind vacation destination. We are proud to be part of a community that understands the importance of each guest's personal experience and that strives to help them make lifelong memories here, in Estes Park.

Visit Estes Park, the name under which the Estes Park Local Marketing District operates, is the official Destination Marketing Organization for Estes Park, Colorado. A DMAI (Destination Marketing Association International) accredited DMO, Visit Estes Park's mission is to drive tourism and year round economic growth through effective and efficient destination marketing. Estes Park, just 90 minutes from Denver, is located at the eastern entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park. A majestic mountain destination known for outdoor adventure, watchable wildlife and scenic beauty, Estes Park is the most visited mountain village in Colorado. www.visitestespark.com

**About Estes Valley Partners for Commerce**

The EVPC is considered the "Voice for Businesses" in the Estes Valley. Through polling their membership and working hand in hand with the Town of Estes Park, Visit Estes Park, the Estes Area Lodging Association, the Economic Development Association and many other organizations, they assist members in many aspects of living, working and doing business in the Estes Valley. www.estesvalleypartners.com

**About The Estes Area Lodging Association**

The Estes Area Lodging Association is a local organization comprised of accommodations and relevant networking partners. EALA’s mission is to unify and promote the lodging and tourism industry in the Estes Area through marketing, services, education, communication, networking and co-operation with local businesses and to improve the profitability and success of all our members and affiliates. www.estesarealodgingassoc.com

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**About The Stanley Hotel/Grand Heritage Hotel Group**

Famous for its old world charm, The Stanley Hotel boasts spectacular views in every direction and is less than six miles from Rocky Mountain National Park. Multi-million dollar renovations have restored this 160-guestroom hotel to its original grandeur. The hotel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a member of Historic Hotels of America and is only an hour and a half away from Denver, making it an ideal destination for a Colorado getaway. www.stanleyhotel.com

Founded in 1989 by John Cullen, Grand Heritage Hotel Group is one of the nation’s premier owner operators of independent luxury hotels and resorts. They will own and operate the hotel accommodations adjoined to the Estes Park Wellness Center, in addition to a 40-room Residence building and 500-seat auditorium located steps from the Wellness Center and adjacent to the main building of the Stanley Hotel. www.grandheritage.com