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N E W S R E L E A S E

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Governor declares "Chautauqua Days" in Nebraska

LINCOLN, Neb.—Gov. Dave Heineman has declared June 16-27 "Chautauqua Days," in recognition of "Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties," which will be hosted by Columbus June 16-20 and by North Platte June 23-27.

A collaboration of the Nebraska Humanities Council and the Kansas Humanities Council, the Chautauqua also will visit Colby and Belleville in Kansas. The 2010 Kansas-Nebraska Chautauqua theme remains relevant to the situation the nation faces today. Audiences will have the opportunity to consider the strength of Nebraskans during the 1930s and celebrate their resilience and creativity through adversity.

"The issues that this Chautauqua highlights relate very closely to the issues that many Americans and Nebraskans face today," said Kristi Hayek, NHC program officer and Kansas-Nebraska Chautauqua coordinator. "The people of Columbus and North Platte and surrounding areas have a great opportunity to explore our collective history from the 1930s but also to make direct connections to their own lives and that of their neighbors."

Scholars will portray five historical characters who helped shape America's response to the Great Depression. The characters are humorist Will Rogers, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, U.S. Sen. Huey Long of Louisiana, evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston. The Chautauqua experience provides for these first-person historical portrayals along with opportunities for audience members to question the scholars, both in character and as a scholar.

The "Bright Dreams, Hard Times" Chautauqua is funded, in part, by a major three-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of the NEH's special "We The People" initiative.

For additional information on this summer's Chautauqua, visit the Kansas-Nebraska Chautauqua website, www.knchautauqua.org, or contact Kristi Hayek at (402) 474-2131 ext. 108, or kristi@nebraskahumanities.org.

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