



NEWS RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Deborah K. Pomeroy,
Kansas Chautauqua Coordinator
785/357-0359; deborah@kansashumanities.org
www.kansashumanities.org

Colby and Belleville to host 1930s Chautauqua

Topeka, KS – Colby and Belleville will host the Kansas Humanities Council's *Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties* Chautauqua. The festival of learning will be in Colby at the Prairie Museum of Art and History, 1905 S. Franklin, June 1-6, 2010 and in Belleville at the Belleville Farm & Home, 1825 N Street (19th and N Street), June 7-13, 2010.

Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties explores the economic uncertainty, government programs, environmental devastation, and artistic movements of the 1930s. The event features first-person portrayals of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Senator Huey Long of Louisiana, Pentecostal leader Aimee Semple McPherson, Harlem Renaissance writer and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston, and humorist Will Rogers. Humanities professionals will portray these famous figures of the 1930s under the Chautauqua tent each evening Thursday through Sunday. Following each evening's presentation, the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions of the famous historical figures as well as the scholar who created the portrayal.

"The themes explored in this Chautauqua are as timely today as they were in the 1930s," said Julie Mulvihill, Executive Director of the Kansas Humanities Council. "Colby and Belleville audiences can expect a lively discussion of historical and contemporary topics under the Chautauqua tent."

The Chautauqua also features daily adult workshops and youth programs, including a Youth Chautauqua Day Camp. At the five-day camp, young people (grades 5-8) will be historians, researchers, and scriptwriters as they prepare to present their own historical characters under the Chautauqua tent.

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From the late 19th century to the first decades of the 20th century, touring Chautauquas combined oratory and lectures about national events with literary readings and musical entertainment that entertained and informed people about political and cultural happenings. For more than 25 years, the Kansas Humanities Council has brought the traditions of the historic Chautauqua to towns and rural communities across the state. Beginning in 1983, KHC revived the Chautauqua movement, and over 50 communities have hosted the contemporary Chautauqua, playing host to the famous and infamous from American history.

The modern-day Chautauqua has a lasting impact on all who attend, observed longtime Chautauquan Fred Krebs, who portrays Huey Long in the upcoming event. He added, “Chautauqua is a moving experience because it allows community members to find connections with one another.”

The *Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties* Chautauqua is presented by the Kansas Humanities Council in partnership with the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Belleville Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Nebraska Humanities Council. The Chautauqua is supported by We the People, a grant initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Kansas Humanities Council (KHC) is a nonprofit cultural organization that conducts and supports community-based programs, serves as a financial resource through an active grant-making program, and encourages Kansans to participate in their communities.

For a complete schedule of Chautauqua events, contact the Kansas Humanities Council at 785/357-0359, or visit www.kansashumanities.org.

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