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N E W S R E L E A S E

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Chautauqua arrives soon in Alliance and Albion

The 2006 Great Plains Chautauqua visits Alliance June 30-July 4 and Albion July 7-11. The Nebraska Humanities Council helps coordinate and fund the Nebraska stops.

This summer's tour is the last year of the "From Sea to Shining Sea" theme that is tied to the Lewis and Clark Expedition's Bicentennial. According to Jane Renner Hood, NHC executive director, "We thought that Nebraskans would enjoy one last opportunity to talk with Captain Clark, his slave York and Sacagawea exactly 200 years later as they were making their way back down the Missouri River toward the beginning of the historic journey in St. Louis."

In addition to the touring company of Chautauqua scholars who portray historical figures, the host communities have organized many history-based events, educational activities and local entertainment to coincide with the Chautauqua visit.

In Alliance, the site is Central Park. Among the special planned events are an art contest, canoeing, wig making, folk dancing, colonial games and Native American games and dances. Cultural trunks will display artifacts of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Nez Perce tribe.

Alliance is in the center of the Nebraska Panhandle, bordered on the south and east by the Sandhills. Founded in 1888 as Grand Lake, the city became a leading railroad and business center. North of Alliance is Carhenge, a popular tourist destination that uses cars to replicate England's Stonehenge.

In Albion, in east-central Nebraska, the Chautauqua site is the Sports Complex. Special planned activities include a photography exhibit, trail walks with uses of plants for food and medicine, pioneer cooking, a raptor recovery display and children's crafts.

Known as the "Gateway to the Sandhills," Albion is home to Olson Nature Preserve, the Boone Country Historical Society Museum and the Albion Area Arts Council.

Among the Chautauqua scholars portraying historical characters from the Lewis and Clark Expedition are Patrick E. McGinnis as William Clark, Charles Everett Pace as York and Cody Harjo as Sacagawea. The most recent addition to the company, Harjo is a Seminole/Otoe/Creek from Ada, Okla. She holds a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College in history, combined with Native American studies, and was named Miss Indian Nations for 2003-2004. A member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, she received the Nancy Boehm Cater Public Policy Grant to study with American Indian Research and Development Inc., and a Native American Studies grant to study Otoe-Missouria history from contact with Lewis and Clark to the present.

Others are Tonia Compton as Dolley Madison, Jerome Kills Small as Tecumseh and D. Jerome Tweton as John Jacob Astor. The scholars portray these figures in historical garb, participating in daily workshops, children's programs and evening stage presentations.

The Great Plains Chautauqua is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities through a special "We The People" grant. It will have traveled to four communities in Oklahoma and Kansas before it reaches Nebraska. After stopping in Nebraska, it moves on to South Dakota and finishes the 2006 tour Aug. 8 in Grand Forks, N.D.

For more details, visit the NHC website at www.nebraskahumanities.org.