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N E W S R E L E A S E

For release: April 24, 2006

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Humanities Council offers resources on immigration

As Congress wrestles with immigration legislation and public attention focuses on the issue, the Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC) offers a wide range of resources to help everyone better understand the larger context of the debate.

The NHC recently initiated a grant emphasis on *The New Nebraskans*, which encourages non-profit organizations and governmental entities to submit proposals that encourage productive civic discussion of issues faced by immigrants, refugees, and their host communities and that will, in turn, help shape informed public policy in our state.

“The Nebraska Humanities Council believes that the public and the elected officials who serve us won’t make good decisions about important public issues like immigration unless the humanities can help frame the questions and provide in-depth understanding of the complexities we’re wrestling with,” said NHC Executive Director Jane Renner Hood. “That’s why the council has committed its resources through our *New Nebraskans* initiative to enable Nebraskans—young and old—to know more about the immigrants and refugees who have come to Nebraska, their impact on our communities, and the options we have in response to their presence.”

The Humanities Resource Center features speakers on topics related to immigration ranging from programs on the constitutional and legal issues involved to Nebraska’s varied ethnic communities. The council’s videotape collection offers titles that look at Asian Americans, Hispanic America and U.S. history and immigration reform. A book series for reading and discussion groups focuses on the immigrant experience and our nation’s melting pot of cultures.

Pairs of cultural encounter trunks give school children grades 4 to 8 an opportunity to explore and contrast the earlier history and traditions of German immigrants to Nebraska with the current experiences and culture of Mexican immigrants. Trunks comparing Swedish and Vietnamese cultures are in preparation.

In collaboration with libraries statewide, the council supports *Prime Time Family Reading Time*, a family literacy program designed especially for low-income, low-literacy Hispanic families. It encourages parents and children to improve their reading skills by reading together as families in the library and in their homes.

“The response that the council has taken to the growth of the Hispanic community in Nebraska is positive and pro-active,” said Erika Hamilton, NHC program officer and statewide coordinator of *Prime Time*. “If the children of immigrants are going to become productive citizens, they need to stay in school and graduate. There is a high correlation between success in school and being read to at home. That’s what we’re trying to encourage with *Prime Time*.”

For grant applications, speakers and other program resources call (402) 474-2131 ex. 101 or visit the council web site www.nebraskahumanities.org