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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—Gov. Dave Heineman has declared June 17-28 “Chautauqua Days,” in recognition of “Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties,” which will be hosted by Broken Bow June 17-21 and by Plattsmouth June 24-28.

A collaboration of the Nebraska Humanities Council and the Kansas Humanities Council, the Chautauqua also will visit Ottawa and Hesston in Kansas. The 2009 Kansas-Nebraska Chautauqua is especially significant for the relatively recent nature of its theme.

“The themes of this Chautauqua are very timely for Nebraskans this year. The Chautauqua experience allows the audience a chance to ask President Franklin Roosevelt about responding to economic crisis, for example,” said Jane Renner Hood, executive director of the Nebraska Humanities Council. “They can compare and contrast his policies to those of President Obama.”

Audiences will have the opportunity to consider the strength of Nebraskans during the 1930s and celebrate their resilience and creativity through adversity.

“Broken Bow and Plattsmouth have a special opportunity this year to explore how history relates to the issues of today,” said Beth McQueen, NHC program officer and Chautauqua coordinator. “The 1930s era provides many parallels to what people are experiencing in Nebraska and this country right now.”

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, Louisiana governor and U.S. Sen. Huey Long, evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson and Harlem Renaissance writer Zora Neale Hurston.

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 Nebraska Humanities Council’s website at www.nebraskahumanities.org or contact Beth McQueen at (402) 474-2131 ext. 108 or beth@nebraskahumanities.org.

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