



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### Walt Disney visits Beech Fork State Park on Saturday

Walt Disney (1901-1966), a pioneer in motion picture animation and the entertainment industry, will be portrayed by James Froemel of Madsville at 7:00 PM on Saturday, July 25 at Beech Fork State Park. The character is brand new to the West Virginia Humanities Council's **History Alive!** program as of this month.

Though his name has become synonymous with the monumentally successful company he created, young Walt Disney struggled to create an animation company in Chicago, Illinois and Kansas City, Missouri before moving to Los Angeles, California in 1923. After losing the rights to some of his early animated characters, he finally struck Hollywood gold with the creation of Mickey Mouse and received Academy Awards for two short films in the late 1920s and early 1930s. His ambitions in animation were finally realized with the 1937 release of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," which became, in its day, the highest grossing sound film of all time.

Disney is one of the many available character presentations offered through the West Virginia Humanities Council's **History Alive!** program as a means of exploring history by interacting with noteworthy historical figures. These programs provide audiences with the opportunity to question those who have shaped our history.

Historical characterization is the vehicle for this program. Humanities scholars have carefully researched a variety of sources about the figures they portray such as journals, letters, official documents, speeches, autobiographies and research by other scholars in developing their presentation.

This program is available to interested nonprofit groups such as libraries, museums, and historical societies. For more information call the West Virginia Humanities Council at 346-8500 or visit the website: [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org)

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*The West Virginia Humanities Council, an independent nonpartisan nonprofit, is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Council is supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and contributions from the private sector. The purposes of the West Virginia Humanities Council are educational, and its mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia.*