



WEST VIRGINIA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release
August 18, 2021*

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SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT KICKS OFF 2021-2022 TOUR IN HARDY COUNTY

Moorefield, WV — On Monday, August 30, the Smithsonian exhibit *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* will launch its statewide tour at Moorefield High School in Hardy County. The exhibit will be open to the public in Moorefield until September 30. The public is invited to an opening reception to be held Monday, August 30, 5:00-6:30 at the high school.

After its special opening, *Crossroads* will be open to the public 12:00 noon to 4:00pm on Saturdays and Sundays; and 5:00-8:00pm on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Hours will be extended during Hardy County's beloved Heritage Weekend, September 25-26. Weekday school hours will be reserved for students and teachers from around the county.

The exhibit examines the present-day turning point at which many rural American towns find themselves. Since the early 1900s, rural America has experienced significant changes in demographics, educational opportunities, access to services, and economic viability. Today, the population of the nation's rural areas is less than half of what it was in 1900, yet America's small towns continue to creatively focus on new opportunities for growth and development. Economic innovation, including investment in cultural and creative economies, has helped many communities create their own renaissance.

After departing Moorefield at the end of September, *Crossroads* will travel to six additional sites around the state, opening at the following dates and locations:

Weston – *Museum of American Glass* – October 6 through November 14, 2021

Welch – *Jack Caffrey Arts and Cultural Center* – November 18 through December 27, 2021

Arthurdale – *Arthurdale Heritage, Inc.* - January 4 through February 5, 2022

Weirton – *Weirton Area Museum and Cultural Center* – February 12 through March 19, 2022

New Martinsville – *Wetzel County Museum* – March 25 through April 28, 2022

Mt. Hope – *Coal Heritage Discovery Center* – May 8 through June 5, 2022

The tour is sponsored by the West Virginia Humanities Council. “Every host community has a different take on the exhibit’s themes,” says Council Program Officer Kyle Warmack. “It’s so exciting to watch these diverse efforts come together.” He adds that visitors can find something different at every site, ranging from local exhibits to theatrical productions, and from historical tours to craft demonstrations. “The range of activities is very exciting,” he adds. “Which is what *Crossroads* is all about—discussing the vibrant heritage and cultural life of our rural communities.”

The Smithsonian’s stay in Moorefield is hosted by the Hardy County Convention and Visitors Bureau (HCCVB), and visitors are encouraged to contact them for more details about local *Crossroads* programming and events. “Each site has a unique approach,” says Warmack. “For example, Hardy County’s programming is taking place all over the county, whereas Arthurdale is much more centralized around the historic homestead.” Keep an eye on the local press, he advises, and visit the *Crossroads* page on the Council’s website, wvhumanities.org, for host organizations’ contact information.

The *Crossroads* tour is made possible through the Museum on Main Street (MOMS) program, an alliance of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, state humanities councils across the country, and cultural organizations in small, rural communities.

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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.