



WEST VIRGINIA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

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SMITHSONIAN LIGHTS UP MAIN STREET WEIRTON

WEIRTON, WV — The Smithsonian traveling exhibit *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* will open at the Weirton Area Museum and Cultural Center (WAMCC) on Monday, January 31. A public reception at 5:30pm will be accompanied by refreshments and a talk by local historian Paul Zuros, author of the popular column “History in the Hills.”

Sponsored by the West Virginia Humanities Council, the exhibit is part of the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program—and in Weirton, it’ll be situated quite literally at 3149 Main Street until March 7, when it will move south to Wetzel County.

“WAMCC Director Savannah Guz has been pulling out all the stops to put together incredible programming,” says Program Officer Kyle Warmack of the Humanities Council. “Musical performances, living history presentations, and talks on Weirton history, you name it. The community has really embraced the opportunity to put Weirton’s past and future in a national context.”

The Smithsonian exhibit itself 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. 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.

Those interested in seeing the exhibit or attending WAMCC events should visit www.weirtonareamuseum.com for more information, or follow WAMCC on Facebook.

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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.