



For Immediate Release

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## Smithsonian Exhibition, *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* Explores Future and Sustainability of Rural Communities

October 13, 2023 – As part of *Crossroads*, a statewide exploration of life and change in rural Utah presented by Utah Humanities and its partners, the [Wasatch County Library](#) announces a collaboration with [Utah Humanities](#) to bring [Crossroads, a Museum on Main Street \(MoMS\) exhibition](#) from the [Smithsonian Institution](#) on a tour through Utah.

**Utah Humanities is touring *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* to eight Utah communities from September 2023 to December 2024.** Community organizations will partner with Utah Humanities to host the exhibition and connect their local stories through companion exhibits and programming.

The Smithsonian's *Crossroads* is a traveling exhibition that provokes fresh thinking and sparks conversations about the future and sustainability of rural communities. *Crossroads* offers small towns a chance to look at their own paths over the past century – to highlight the changes that affected their fortunes, explore how they have adapted, and think about what's next.

**The opening of the *Crossroads* in Heber City takes place at the Wasatch County Library and will enjoy a stay in the Heber Valley from November 4, 2023 to January 12, 2024.**

As an accompaniment to the Smithsonian's *Crossroads* exhibition, a local companion exhibit "*Celebrating our Homegrown Heritage: Past, Present, and Future*" has been produced by a team of Wasatch High School students enrolled in the Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) program. Their exhibit features audiovisual interviews with long-time residents of Wasatch County, members of "heritage" families, as well as newcomers and younger generations.

Additional details on *Crossroads* in Heber Valley are available at the [Wasatch County Library](#) and [Utah Humanities](#), and in this [event document](#).

**Juan Tomás Lee, Project Director at Wasatch County Library** says "Crossroads allows us to reflect on and celebrate Wasatch County's homegrown heritage, past, present, and future. It also helps us create experiences that highlight our communities' uniqueness through local content and public programs that complement the Smithsonian exhibition."

**Megan van Frank, Director of the Center for Community Heritage at Utah Humanities**, is coordinating the exhibition tour in Utah. In explaining the role Utah Humanities plays in bringing the Smithsonian to Utah, she says, "*We are proud to bring the Crossroads exhibition to eight communities around the state in 2023-2024. This collaboration among national, state, and community organizations strengthens Utah's cultural community and helps preserve and share Utah history. We work closely with host sites to leverage the national exhibition to bring focus to their own experiences and bring context to an understanding of rural identity, land, and community.*" Van Frank hopes that "*visitors to the Crossroads exhibition will come away with an appreciation for the tension between cherished ideals and challenging realities of life in rural Utah. The exhibition and each local project is an opportunity for Utahns to explore change and adaptation in rural America and Utah as part of local, state, and national conversations.*"

**Professor Greg Smoak of the University of Utah is the consulting scholar for the Utah tour of the *Crossroads* exhibition.** He says, "*Utah is an urban place with a rural heart. The vast majority of our state's population lives in the densely populated cities of the Wasatch Front. Yet, if pressed, many of those urban dwellers might hesitate to think of themselves as city folk. That is because rural life holds deep and resilient meanings for many Americans, especially here in Utah. Contemporary pressures that drive change may seem daunting, yet adaptation has always been core to rural life in Utah. The changes and challenges facing small communities today are not unprecedented, and considering the ways Utahns have navigated decision points in the past might help us think about the future of rural Utah.*"

**Terri Cobb, Registrar at Museum on Main Street, Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service / Smithsonian Affiliations** remarks that *“Crossroads: Change in Rural America is part of the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils, and local host institutions. We are proud to be partnering with Utah Humanities to bring Crossroads to eight communities across Utah throughout the next year. Crossroads takes a broad look at the characteristics of rural America. It explores how an attraction to and interaction with the land formed the basis of rural America and how rural communities and small towns evolve. It also highlights how change has transformed rural America and how rural Americans are evolving for the future.”*

To learn more about the statewide tour, contact Utah Humanities at 801.359.9670 or visit the [Utah Humanities website](#).

*Crossroads: Change in Rural America is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution, Utah Humanities, and the Wasatch County Library.*

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