



NEWS RELEASE

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Prison and Post Rock are Subjects of *Kansans Tell Their Stories Documentary Shorts*

TOPEKA – The Kansas State Penitentiary’s role in Lansing’s development and the Post Rock legacy of Wilson and Lucas are the subjects of the first ever *Kansans Tell Their Stories Documentaries*. The 10-minute short films, sponsored by the Kansas Humanities Council, tell a unique Kansas story through the lens of the community, both past and present. Each community is hosting a local premiere of their own short documentary. The premieres will take place in Lansing at the Lansing High School Auditorium, 220 Lion Lane, at 7 PM on Wednesday, November 12th and in Lucas at the Lucas Area Community Theater, 116 South Main, at 7 PM on Wednesday, November 19th. Both premieres are free and open to the public. A panel discussion involving the filmmakers, historical consultants, and community members will follow the premieres.

“The Kansas Humanities Council is excited about the innovative work found in the short documentaries,” said Julie Mulvihill, Executive Director of the Kansas Humanities Council. “These local stories inspire curiosity of the past, and really get us thinking about our own hometowns. We’re looking forward to the premieres and anticipate great discussions about Kansas communities in the 21st century.”

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The Lansing Historical Museum presents *The Kansas State Penitentiary: An Institution and a Neighbor*. The film explores Lansing's 140-year relationship with the Kansas State Penitentiary and examines how the institution fills a vital social and economic role within the community. In addition to providing employment for Lansing residents, the prison has been the site of picnics, softball games, and other community activities. Today, the Leavenworth County Fire District No. 1 and the Lansing Historical Museum both reside on the grounds of the re-named Lansing Correctional Facility. "We are very excited about this project and believe it truly shows the great relationship between the two entities," said Nolan Sunderman, Lansing Economic Development/Convention & Visitors Bureau Director. "The documentary will be utilized in many areas from our website to our local government channel, LGTV."

The Amazing 100 Mile Tourism Coalition presents *A Drive Through History Along the Post Rock Scenic Byway*. The relationship between community and land is told through the story of the Novak family, a Bohemian-Czechoslovakian family who settled between Wilson and Lucas in 1885. Like many settlers on the treeless prairie, they used native limestone to build their homes and barns. The limestone was famously used for fence posts, giving the region the name "Post Rock Country." Today, the Post Rock legacy lives on in area landmarks like the Midland Hotel in Wilson and the Garden of Eden in Lucas. Erika Nelson of the Amazing 100 Mile Tourism Coalition hopes that the documentary short will "help our communities explain an important 'building block' of our area, and will give visitors a deeper understanding of the importance of this unique feature to the region."

Lawrence production company Hometown Collaborations worked with each community to bring their stories to life. The professional filmmakers have worked with the Kansas Music Hall of Fame, the Dole Institute at the University of Kansas, and are currently filming "Earthwork."

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The Digital Documentary Shorts were funded through the 2007 *Kansans Tell Their Stories* grants. *Kansans Tell Their Stories* is a Kansas Humanities Council initiative intended to strengthen Kansas communities through the exploration of heritage, traditions, and ideas. *Kansans Tell Their Stories* is supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the State of Kansas.

A non-profit organization with over 35 years experience, the Kansas Humanities Council conducts and supports community-based programs, serves as a financial resource through an active grant-making program, and encourages Kansans to participate in their communities. For more information contact the Kansas Humanities Council at 785/357-0359 or visit online at www.kansashumanities.org.

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