

Sample Press Release: PRE-OPENING

Local Contact: [local press contact, phone/email]

State Council Contact: [state council contact, phone/email]

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[date]

Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Highlighting Changing Landscape of Rural America Coming to [Town Name]

The Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street, in cooperation with [Name of State Humanities Council], presents "Crossroads: Change in Rural America." The exhibition examining the evolving landscape of rural American opens at the [Venue] [Date]. "Crossroads" will be on view through [Date].

[Insert venue name] and the surrounding community has been expressly chosen by the **[name of state humanities council]** to host "Crossroads" as part of the Museum on Main Street program—a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. The exhibition will tour **[number]** communities in **[name of state]** from **[start of state tour]** through **[end of state tour]**; an itinerary is attached.

"Crossroads" explores how rural American communities changed in the 20th century. From sea to shining sea, the vast majority of the United States landscape remains rural with only 3.5% of the landmass considered urban. Since 1900, the percentage of Americans living in rural areas dropped from 60% to 17%. The exhibition looks at that remarkable societal change and how rural Americans responded.

Americans have relied on rural crossroads for generations. These places where people gather to exchange goods, services and culture and to engage in political and community discussions are an important part of our cultural fabric. Despite the massive economic and demographic impacts brought on by these changes, America's small towns continue to creatively focus on new opportunities for growth and development.

"Crossroads' allows us to reflect on [town name's] history, present and future and we are excited to explore what the future may hold for our community," said **[venue**

spokesperson’s name, title]. “We want to convene conversations about what makes our community unique and have developed local exhibitions and public programs to complement the Smithsonian exhibition.” Such free events include **[insert exhibition highlights and public program highlights here].**

Designed for small-town museums, libraries and cultural organizations, “Crossroads” will serve as a community meeting place for conversations about how rural America has changed. With the support and guidance of state humanities councils, these towns will develop complementary exhibits, host public programs and facilitate educational initiatives to raise people’s understanding about their own history, the joys and challenges of living rural, how change has impacted their community, and prompt discussion of goals for the future.

The exhibition is part of Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils across the nation, and local host institutions. To learn more about “Crossroads” and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit www.museumonmainstreet.org.

Support for MoMS has been provided by the U.S. Congress. **[Insert state/local sponsor information, if applicable]**

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 65 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. For exhibition description and tour schedules, visit www.sites.si.edu.

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[Insert venue information: address, contact number, and hours of operation]

[Insert state council information: address, contact person, phone/email]