



August 16, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thomaston contact: Lori Showalter Smith

(706) 647-9686; lorishowalter@windstream.net

Georgia Humanities contact: Arden Williams

(404) 523-6220; awilliams@georgiahumanities.org

Smithsonian contact: Jennifer Schommer

(202) 633-3121; schommerj@si.edu

**Georgia Humanities Announces the Grand Opening of
Crossroads: Change in Rural America
Smithsonian traveling exhibition launches on August 24th in Thomaston**

(Atlanta, GA) - Georgia Humanities, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, is pleased to present *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*, a traveling exhibition that examines the evolving landscape of rural America. In Georgia, *Crossroads* will travel from August 24, 2019, through June 6, 2020, on display for six weeks each in Thomaston, McRae-Helena, Monticello, Cuthbert, Summerville, and Blue Ridge. Secretary emeritus of the Smithsonian Institution and president emeritus of the Georgia Institute of Technology, Dr. Wayne Clough, is the honorary chair of the Georgia tour of *Crossroads*.

The grand opening will take place on August 24, 2019, at 10:00am, with a community ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by musical performances, a farmer's market, vendor booths, and a vintage car and tractor show around the Thomaston downtown square.

"I hope that visitors to the *Crossroads* exhibition will reflect on the rural places and people that have been part of their lives and how these people and places have affected them, our state of Georgia, the United States, and the global community," says Laura McCarty, president of Georgia Humanities.

The *Crossroads* exhibition explores how rural American communities have changed over time, organized around the themes of identity, community, persistence, the land, and managing change. Similar to the rest of the United States, Georgia's landscape is largely rural, with over 75% of the state's counties having fewer than 50,000 residents. In the 20th century, growing urban populations shifted economic investment and political influence from the counties to the cities, and since then, the pace of rural change has accelerated.

"We celebrate rural America not only because it serves as our breadbasket but also because it is home to values, open spaces, and traditions not found in big cities," adds Georgia *Crossroads* honorary chair Wayne Clough. "The bottom line is that even in rural America change is around the corner, but communities that find ways to come together, to bind to their core values, to work to become a better place for all its citizens, are the ones that adapt and survive."

Crossroads encourages visitors to reflect on the past and present of rural Georgia, to think about what our rural communities mean today, and to consider how to prepare for and solve the challenges and opportunities of the future. The story of rural Georgia is told through the lens of host communities, who will present the exhibition and will develop complementary exhibits, host public programs, and facilitate educational initiatives to raise people's understanding about their own history, how change has impacted their community, and prompt discussions of goals for the future.

Crossroads: Change in Rural America has been made possible in Georgia by Georgia Humanities, in partnership with the Center for Public History at the University of West Georgia and Georgia EMC. Georgia programming is supported by the Georgia Department of Economic Development; Georgia Farm Bureau; Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University; USDA Rural Development, Georgia State Office; Georgia Council for the Arts; and Trucks, Inc.

Crossroads: Change in Rural America is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and State Humanities Councils nationwide. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress.

As *Crossroads* opens, the Smithsonian celebrates the 25th anniversary of Museum on Main Street. The first town to host a MoMS exhibition—*Produce for Victory: Posters on the American Homefront, 1941–1945*—was Moreland, Georgia, with a population of 449. Moreland was the first of thousands of small, rural towns that have welcomed the Smithsonian program aimed at increasing awareness of local history.

DETAILS: *Crossroads* in Thomaston, August 24–October 4, 2019

- Thomaston Mills Bldg., 104 North Center Street, Thomaston, GA 30286
- Ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Georgia Tour of *Crossroads*: August 24, 10:00 a.m.
- Exhibition hours: Tuesday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.; Sat., 10:00am–2:00 p.m.
- For more information on events scheduled in Thomaston and Upson County, visit the Thomaston Exhibition Facebook page: fb.me/travelingsmithsonian.

About Georgia Humanities

Georgia Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization that gathers, preserves, and shares our state's distinctive stories through a range of cultural and educational programs and resources. Georgia Humanities partners with scholars and educators across the state to bring people together in learning and conversation. Founded in 1971, Georgia Humanities is the statewide affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. To learn more, visit GeorgiaHumanities.org.

About Museum on Main Street and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

Museum on Main Street is 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 MuseumOnMainStreet.org.

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 descriptions and tour schedules, visit Sites.SI.edu.

###