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Library reveals *The Grapes of Wrath* is 2008 All Pikes Peak Reads selection *Community-wide project launches this fall*

Colorado Springs, Colo. (June 27, 2008) – Readers in the Pikes Peak region will reflect on the past and envision the future with this year’s All Pikes Peak Reads selection, *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Pikes Peak Library District announced John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* as the 2008 All Pikes Peak Reads selection at a news conference Friday. APPR will also partner with a community-wide visioning project, Dream City: Vision 2020.

In addition to *The Grapes of Wrath*, APPR will include nonfiction selection *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl*, by Timothy Egan.

The community will be immersed in stories of the nature of survival and the human spirit, while embarking on a new vision for the Pikes Peak region in the year 2020.

“*The Grapes of Wrath* & *The Worst Hard Time* books were selected for the 2008 APPR because the topics are relevant to current national issues,” said Cal Otto, APPR founder and chair. “We need to examine and understand how society created the Dust Bowl of the 1930s and the floods of Katrina in hopes that we can prevent similar disasters in the future. Since both disasters altered our national fabric we also want to discuss response to and prevention of such events.”

In *The Worst Hard Time*, Egan profiles many of the survivors and their families and recounts those difficult times also written about by John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath*. With the assistance of community partners, APPR will seek to bring author Timothy Egan to Colorado Springs to speak during the project.

The 2008 APPR project will be thematically tied to *The Grapes of Wrath*, with companion books available for younger readers. This allows PPLD to broaden the scope of APPR to include improved offerings for readers of all ages, a key objective of the library district.

“The long-standing goals of APPR include engaging people of all ages and building a framework for continued community dialog. We feel that this year’s project offers new and broader ways of meeting those goals, through the variety of selected books and the collaboration with Dream City Vision 2020,” said Dee Vazquez, PPLD Community Relations Officer.

All of the books will be available at PPLD libraries, and through local bookstore partners. Book discussion materials and curriculum guides for elementary, middle, and high schools are also under development.

The month-long program, which begins with a kick-off event Sept. 21 at America the Beautiful Park, is a community-wide effort to improve literacy and foster dialogue across social, cultural, and generational lines. Book discussion groups, children’s programs and games, film screenings, and other APPR themed events will be offered at the PPLD and other community sites.

APPR 2008: A New Direction

The All Pikes Peak Reads project will spend the next two years aligned with the community’s Dream City: Vision 2020 project. It is a regional endeavor fostering community engagement and discernment of what our community should be in the year 2020. Activities fall into three areas: inspiration, education, and engagement. All Pikes Peak Reads will contribute to all three through its traditional offerings and many new activities.

The 2008 APPR book selection will be a retrospective look at communal crisis in the U.S. and in our region. Discussion will cover lessons we can learn from history and apply to the visioning process as we look to the near future.

APPR 2009 will incorporate “community theater” based on community engagement outcomes. The public will be invited to select the 2009 book from a list of texts deriving from the visioning process. It is a new direction for APPR and an exciting expansion of a tremendously successful project into new territory.

Dream City: Vision 2020 and APPR 2008 Highlights

One of the first opportunities for community engagement is the *Contests for Young Visionaries*. The contests encourage people of all ages to create visual art, performing art, film, literature or poetry representing the artists’ hopes and visions for the community in the year 2020. The contest will be open to three age groups: 12 and younger; ages 13-17, and adults 18 and older. More details will be available at ppld.org or dreamcity2020.com.

About APPR

The Grapes of Wrath marks the seventh year of APPR. All Pikes Peak Reads was one of Colorado’s first community-wide reading programs, and sets itself apart from other “one book” programs around the country by incorporating an original adaptation of the book for the stage. Also unique to the program are curriculum guides for local

classrooms. Last year's project, featuring *Zorro*, reached more than 50,000 students and thousands more adults.

Cal Otto, APPR founder and chair, modeled the program after similar one-book projects in cities like Chicago. APPR debuted in 2002 and has quickly become a local institution.

The APPR book is selected by a committee based on the following criteria. The book must have broad appeal; be suitable for adaptation to the stage; be written at a sixth- to ninth-grade reading level; be a book in print; be available in multiple formats; and contain issues relevant to residents of the Pikes Peak region.

Past selections include: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (2006), *The Arabian Nights Entertainments*, edited by Andrew Lang (2005), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (2004), Marry Shelley's *Frankenstein* (2003), and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (2002).

2008 APPR Programs & Activities

With the help of 30 community partner organizations, 13 public school districts and 240 private school partners, All Pikes Peak Reads engaged thousands of residents in El Paso County last year in historical, cultural, and literary exploration of a work of fiction that presents significant issues pertinent to our society. In 2007, attendance at events increased 26 percent from 2006. This year's lineup of events includes an offering of theater, art contests and exhibits, historical presentations, and more.

THEATREWORKS at UCCS will partner with the library for the seventh consecutive year. Performances, which begin September 25, will be held in the Dusty Loo Bon Vivant Theater.

Additional programs scheduled with community partners include:

- "Journey from the Dust: A Story of the Great Depression" presented by Living Voices
- Contest for multi-genre museum exhibits (based on a guide from ReadWriteThink.org)
- Film screenings and scholarly presentations at PPLD, Pikes Peak Community College, Colorado College, and various community Centers.
- Manitou Art Theater production of *Kids in the Dust Bowl: True Colorado Perspectives* – at the Business of Arts Center in Manitou Springs and in libraries throughout the community.
- PPLD is partnering with the New Deal for the New Deal of Southern Colorado to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the National New Deal Program.

Sponsorships for this year's Read are being finalized, and partnerships will include local bookstores, local performing arts groups, Pikes Peak Community College, The Colorado College, public and private schools, and various community centers. A complete schedule of events related to *The Grapes of Wrath* will be published this fall in *The Gazette, Colorado Springs Independent* and on PPLD's website at ppld.org.

For additional information, please visit the official Web sites at ppld.org or www.dreamcity.2020.com.