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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Highlighting Changing Landscape of Rural America Coming to Walsenburg, Colorado**

Colorado Humanities will tour “Crossroads: Change in Rural America,” a Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street (MoMS) exhibit to 10 Colorado communities August 2023 to December 2024. The exhibit takes a broad look at the characteristics of rural America, how an attraction to and interaction with the land formed the basis of rural America, and how these communities and small towns evolve. The exhibition opens at the Museum of Friends, 600 Main Street, Walsenburg, CO 81089, on August 26, 2023 and will be on view there through October 8, 2023 (hours Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.) before moving to the other communities

#### **About “Crossroads: Change in Rural America”**

“Crossroads” explores how rural American communities changed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Currently, most 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, culture, and 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 Huerfano County and Walsenburg’s past, present, and future and we are excited to explore what the future may hold for our community,” said Maria Cocchiarelli, Museum of Friends’ Executive Director. A series of public programs and facilitated conversations will also complement the Smithsonian exhibition, and all are free events with donations welcome. Planned events include a screening and discussion of the film “The Five States of Colorado” at the Walsenburg Fox Theater on August 18<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m., two Volunteer and Docent Training sessions on how to lead tours through this exhibit on Friday

August 18<sup>th</sup> and Friday August 25<sup>th</sup> both at 3 p.m., and a School-Tour program available for youth K through 12 from August 29, 2023 through October 8, 2023. Additionally on Saturday September 16, Museum of Friends will host Story Share with CU Boulder Drama Department's Professor Jim Walker and Improvisation Troupe. Culminating conversations will be held in the fall to explore the impact that the MoMS exhibition "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" had on opening dialogue within the community. Support for MoMS has been provided by the U.S. Congress, Colorado Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

### **About Colorado Humanities**

Colorado Humanities is the only Colorado organization exclusively dedicated to supporting humanities education for adults and children statewide. Celebrating its 49th year and its 19th year as host for the Colorado Center for the Book, Colorado Humanities, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, partners with hundreds of organizations across the state, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Library of Congress Center for the Book, the Smithsonian Institution, and the national award-winning educational nonprofit Helps Education Fund.

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