

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**SEPTEMBER 22, 2004**

### **NEBRASKA CITIZENS TO READ MY ÁNTONIA IN SPRING OF 2005**

2005 will be very special in Nebraska. Citizens across the entire state will be invited to read the classic novel *My Ántonia* by Nebraska's very own Willa Cather through a new initiative launched by the Willa Cather Foundation, the Nebraska Library Commission, and the Nebraska Center for the Book.

The Cather Foundation and the newly formed One Book/One State Nebraska State Steering Committee, chaired by Sue Maher from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, are hoping that librarians across the state will pitch in to help make this a successful undertaking. Partial funding for the initiative has been provided by the Nebraska Humanities Council.

The concept is not a new one to Nebraskans. Several libraries, including Lincoln, Hastings, and Omaha, have already initiated "One Book/One City or Town or County" reading projects in their communities. Those communities that have not experienced the One Book/One City or Town or County experience will have a unique opportunity to obtain a variety of resources to provide support for the reading of *My Ántonia*. The Steering Committee encourages those communities that have held One Book/One City experiences to build upon previous successes by becoming part of this statewide initiative and encouraging their communities to read this American classic.

Posters, information about *My Ántonia* and Willa Cather, discussion questions/ideas, and other information will be available by the end of the year. The goal is to have every community in the state complete its activities by the end of the third week in April in time for a statewide program on *My Ántonia* to be held in Willa Cather's Red Cloud.

Participants in One Book/One State from across Nebraska will be invited to attend the Cather Foundation's 50th Annual Spring Festival on April 29-30, 2005, in Red Cloud, Nebraska. Cather scholars from throughout the United States will be available to lead discussions and answer questions about *My Ántonia*.

A writing competition will be conducted for secondary students in schools across the state. Winners will receive prizes and awards at the 2005 Spring Festival in Red Cloud on April 29th in special ceremonies at the newly restored Red Cloud Opera House.

Those interested in the One Book/One State project will not want to miss the PBS broadcast of a Cather biography called "The Road is All" to be aired on the American Masters series in 2005. The first preview screening will be held this fall at the Red Cloud Opera House on October 16, 2004, at 2:00 and 7:00 p.m. You are welcome to attend free of charge. Call 402-746-2641 to reserve seats. The biography will also be previewed in Omaha, Lincoln, and Scottsbluff. Look for times and places in the community closest to you.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

[www.willacather.org](http://www.willacather.org)

or

BETTY KORT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE CATHER FOUNDATION

413 NORTH WEBSTER STREET

RED CLOUD, NE 68970

(402)746-2653

[willacather@gpcom.net](mailto:willacather@gpcom.net)

or

STATE STEERING COMMITTEE

The State Committee is chaired by Sue Maher, Graduate Program Chair, University of Nebraska-Omaha. Members of the committee include the following:

Tracy Bicknell-Holmes, Nebraska Library Association president

Carol J. Connor, Library Director, Lincoln City Libraries

Brenda Ealey, Southeast Library System

Gail Formanack, Nebraska Educational Media Arts Association (NEMA)

Jane Hood, Executive Director, Nebraska Humanities Council

Betty Kort, Executive Director, The Cather Foundation

Mel Krutz, The Nebraska Center for the Book

Laureen Riedesel, Beatrice Libraries

Rivkah Sass, Omaha Public Libraries

Myrna Tewes, Director, One Lincoln/One Book, Lincoln Public Library

Linda Trout, Omaha Public Libraries

Rod Wagner, Director, State Library Commission

Peggy Williams, Nebraska Language Arts Council

Dee Yost, Public Services Librarian, Hastings College

Bev Austin, Cather Circle, University of Nebraska Alumni Association