



THE WABASH: LIFE ON THE BRIGHT, WHITE RIVER

Documentary Project to be Distributed in 2006

OVERVIEW: WFYI and the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission are in the final stages of development of their documentary regarding the Wabash River. This program will follow the commission's suggestion to create a defining thread of land use: historically, developmentally, environmentally, and in conservation for the future. This program will be designed for broadcast on Indiana public television stations, as well as other distribution sources, such as cable systems, selected commercial stations and for public presentations. With funding from interested partners including but not limited to the Wabash Valley Association, the Nature Conservancy, the Rivers Institute, and Hoosier Energy, the documentary is expected to be finished and broadcast during the winter and widely distributed by the summer of 2006.

PROGRAM FORMAT AND CONTENT: WFYI has developed the 60-minute documentary concerning the heritage, the environmental concerns and culture involving the Wabash River. WFYI worked throughout 2004 and 2005, with the Commission, to secure the most effective individuals to interview and to assemble the various concepts of the importance of the river and the most pressing issues it faces. The final show seeks to present a combination of experts and people whose lives are tied to the river. Between them, this creates a full picture of the impact of the Wabash River on the lives of Hoosiers – and the impact that Indiana residents have on the quality and future of the river itself.

Specific components of the project include the geological history of the river, human development in early settlements and the first modes of transportation along the river and profiles of the unique lifestyles that have been built along the banks of the Wabash. The program follows the economic growth and development of cities, major transportation, the impact on natural habitats (including rare and endangered species of wildlife and depletion of wetlands), as well as conservation efforts to preserve the Wabash River.

BROADCAST: WFYI envisions an initial broadcast to be offered for Indiana statewide distribution through the eight public television stations, collectively known as IPBS. Additionally, WFYI will help the Commission find other venues for playing the documentary. It is expected that this production will be duplicated to DVD and CD-ROM for use in classrooms and other public presentations.

PARTNERS:

WFYI is the flagship of Indiana PBS stations, earning sixteen Emmy nominations in 2004 and winning eight. Celebrating over three decades, WFYI connects more than 450,000 Hoosier households to valued information and cultural enrichment every week. WFYI's seasoned core of professionals offers national and regional television and radio production and distribution, as well as local programming initiatives and educational outreach activities. The mission of WFYI in Indianapolis is "to serve as a community resource by providing educational, informational, and cultural services and entertainment of the highest quality through television and radio productions, educational telecommunications services and community outreach events and activities."

The **Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission** was authorized by the 1991 Indiana General Assembly for the promotion of conservation and development of the natural, cultural, and recreational resources in the corridor encourage sustainable development of the corridor. The Commission's vision is to help local communities preserve, enhance, and interpret for educational and inspirational benefit the unique and significant natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor; promote public/private partnerships; create a corridor identity; expand a variety of opportunities and linkages; encourage a broad range of economic development improving the quality of life for present and future generations.

Commission members include- the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, representatives from each of the counties through which the Wabash flows, the Indiana Tourism Division, INDOT and the Office of Water Quality.

CONCLUSION: The Wabash River embodies both a vivid subject matter and a rich blend of Indiana's culture of the past, present and future. The history of the Wabash tells the story of the geological, economic, ethnic, ecological, environmental and cultural evolution of the state of Indiana. The Wabash is a river that has almost iconic properties, and by traversing the state, it has an identity that is linked to Indiana. This documentary is an opportunity to offer new insights about the river and its watershed to the general public, while serving as a tool for discussing its preservation for generations to follow.

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