



Smithsonian



UTAH HUMANITIES
Ideas in Action



For Immediate Release

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Smithsonian Exhibition, *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* Explores Future and Sustainability of Rural Communities in Washington County

March 5, 2024 – As part of *Crossroads*, a statewide exploration of life and change in rural Utah presented by [Utah Humanities](#) and its partners, the [Silver Reef Museum](#) announces it will bring [Crossroads, a Museum on Main Street \(MoMS\) exhibition](#) from the [Smithsonian Institution](#) to Washington County.

The Smithsonian's *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* is a traveling exhibition that provokes fresh thinking and sparks conversations about the future and sustainability of rural communities. *Crossroads* offers small towns a chance to look at their own paths over the past century – to highlight the changes that affected their fortunes, explore how they have adapted, and think about what's next.

Utah Humanities is touring *Crossroads* to eight Utah communities from September 2023 to December 2024. Community organizations are partnering with Utah Humanities to host the national exhibition and connect their local stories through companion exhibits and programming.

Crossroads will be hosted at the Silver Reef Museum | Ghost Town in Leeds, Utah from March 9 to April 28, 2024. For more information about the exhibit hours and additional details, please visit the [Silver Reef Museum](#) website. As part of the Washington County tour stop, the Silver Reef Museum is partnering with Arts to Zion | Southern Utah and Washington County Historical Society to create "*Crossroads: Change in Washington County!*" This local project includes collaborative exhibits in several of the county's museums, lectures, community discussions, family art activities, and other events throughout Washington County. More information about these events can be found on the [Crossroads page of the Arts to Zion website](#). The site features a Google Map for all of the collaborative events and exhibits, with directions downloadable to mobile devices.

The Smithsonian *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* exhibition in Leeds opens on:

Date: Saturday, March 9, 2024

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: Silver Reef Museum | Silver Reef Ghost Town, 1903 Wells Fargo Rd. Leeds, UT

Phone: 435.879.2254

Email: museum@silverreef.org

For more information about the museum exhibits, lectures and activities, as well as a Google map of the locations, visit the [Arts to Zion](#) website.

Bobbi Wan-kier, Director of Projects & Manager of the Silver Reef Museum and Executive Director of Arts to Zion, shares that "We are very excited to host the *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* Smithsonian exhibit at the [Silver Reef Museum](#) in Leeds, UT. It offers an outstanding opportunity for us to participate in high caliber exhibition programming and it has provided the opportunity to partner with our local [Arts to Zion](#) and [Washington County Historical Society](#) organizations, and strengthen our community outreach efforts and relationships. We are proud to collaborate with our community partners in telling our local stories of growth, and resilience in a rather harsh rural environment up until the tourism that supports us today. As our area grows, our new residents can take part and have pride in knowing what went on before with this county-wide

project. Hundreds of individuals are participating in our museum exhibits, activities, and events to help us collectively reach everyone with “Crossroads: Change in Washington County.” Our map of museums and activities is located at our [Arts to Zion](#) website. Visitors who want a deeper dive into how we have changed up until today can investigate resources at the [Washington County Historical Society](#).”

Megan van Frank, Director of the Center for Community Heritage at Utah Humanities, is coordinating the exhibition tour in Utah. In explaining the role Utah Humanities plays in bringing the Smithsonian to Utah, she says, “We are proud to bring the Crossroads exhibition to eight communities around the state in 2023-2024. This collaboration among national, state, and local organizations strengthens Utah’s cultural community and helps preserve and share Utah history. We work closely with host sites to leverage the national exhibition to bring focus to their own experiences and bring context to an understanding of rural identity, land, and community.” Van Frank hopes that “visitors to the Crossroads exhibition will come away with an appreciation for the tension between cherished ideals and challenging realities of life in rural Utah. The exhibition and each local project is an opportunity for Utahns to explore change and adaptation in rural America and Utah as part of local, state, and national conversations.”

Professor Greg Smoak of the University of Utah is the consulting scholar for the Utah tour of the Crossroads exhibition. He says, “Utah is an urban place with a rural heart. The vast majority of our state’s population lives in the densely populated cities of the Wasatch Front. Yet, if pressed, many of those urban dwellers might hesitate to think of themselves as city folk. That is because rural life holds deep and resilient meanings for many Americans, especially here in Utah. Contemporary pressures that drive change may seem daunting, yet adaptation has always been core to rural life in Utah. The changes and challenges facing small communities today are not unprecedented, and considering the ways Utahns have navigated decision points in the past might help us think about the future of rural Utah.”

Terri Cobb, Registrar at Museum on Main Street, Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service / Smithsonian Affiliations remarks that “Crossroads: Change in Rural America is part of the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils, and local host institutions. We are proud to be partnering with Utah Humanities to bring Crossroads to eight communities across Utah throughout the next year. Crossroads takes a broad look at the characteristics of rural America. It explores how an attraction to and interaction with the land formed the basis of rural America and how rural communities and small towns evolve. It also highlights how change has transformed rural America and how rural Americans are evolving for the future.”

To learn more about the statewide tour, contact Utah Humanities at 801.359.9670 or visit the [Utah Humanities website](#), or [Washington County activities listing](#).

Crossroads: Change in Rural America is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution, Utah Humanities, and the Sliver Reef Museum.

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