



# West Virginia Humanities Council

1310 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, WV 25301

Phone: (304)346-8500 Fax: (304)346-8504 E-Mail: [wvhuman@wvhumanities.org](mailto:wvhuman@wvhumanities.org) Website: [wvhumanities.org](http://wvhumanities.org)

*For immediate release*  
April 11, 2008

## **West Virginia Humanities Council Announces Online Encyclopedia**

Charleston — Based on the success of its *West Virginia Encyclopedia* reference book, the state Humanities Council announces plans to take the big book beyond print and online.

“We are not interested in just putting the book online,” says executive director Ken Sullivan. “Rather, we expect to create a thoroughly interactive reference web site. The online *West Virginia Encyclopedia* will be enhanced with audio and video and more illustrations than could ever be packed into a book, as well as maps, timelines, and other interactive features.”

The Humanities Council published the *West Virginia Encyclopedia* on West Virginia Day, June 20, 2006. The book is now in its second printing with more than 16,000 copies sold. Nearly 1,000 pages in length, it includes 2,200 articles by 600 writers, experts in fields ranging from archeology, biography, history and literature through folklore, culture, and the arts and sciences. The *West Virginia Encyclopedia* has become the standard reference for all things West Virginia, and its contents will provide the information base for the proposed online reference.

The Council’s board of directors approved the concept of an online *Encyclopedia* last fall and again discussed its development at the recent spring meeting. The Council will begin the project in its 2009 fiscal year, which starts this fall, as staff works toward a June 20, 2010, launch for the electronic *Encyclopedia*.

— more —

Planning for the online reference work has been under way for nearly a year. Humanities Council staff met with their counterparts in Georgia and Virginia who have successful online encyclopedia projects. In addition, the Council has conducted meetings about the online *Encyclopedia* with representatives from the West Virginia Library Commission, Marshall University, West Virginia University, the Governor's Office of Technology, WVNET, and Wheeling Jesuit University as well as individual technologists.

"We spent most of a decade and almost a million dollars developing the print *Encyclopedia*. The online version, in its own way, will be fully as large an undertaking. We don't expect to take as much time, but no doubt the cost will be substantial," Sullivan says.

A list of potential funders for the online *Encyclopedia* is being developed, with some state and national funding proposals already submitted. Anyone interested in learning more may contact the West Virginia Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Blvd., E., Charleston WV 25301; (304) 346-8500.

Sullivan noted that the Humanities Council remains committed to the print version of the *West Virginia Encyclopedia*. "We are book lovers, and we expect to keep the *West Virginia Encyclopedia* permanently in print. Long-term we expect the online *Encyclopedia* to help sell the book and to offer a vehicle for continuously updating the contents."

The print version of the *West Virginia Encyclopedia* is available in bookstores or directly from the Humanities Council. It may be purchased at [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org), or by calling (304)346-8500. The book sells for \$44.95, plus six percent state sales tax and \$6 for postage and handling if ordered by mail. Visa and MasterCard are accepted.

###