

PRESS RELEASE:

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For more information:

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**DOUGLASVILLE'S 13TH ANNUAL GEORGIA COWBOY POETS GATHERING:
"HITTIN' THE TRAIL"**

Douglasville, Georgia – The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is pleased to sponsor its 13th annual Georgia Cowboy Poets Gathering at the Mashburn Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of the Douglas County High School on Saturday, February 28, 2009. The doors will open at 5 p.m. so participants can view this year's special display of cowboy hats, spurs and saddles, along with a "cowboy teepee" in the lobby of Douglas County High School. The evening performance begins at 7 p.m. Showcasing local performers and members of the Douglas County Cowboy Poets as well as the Polk County Pioneers who will sing and play guitar, fiddle, harmonica and mandolin for Old West and traditional; cowboy songs, this special event is presented by the Douglas County Cowboy Poets in partnership with the Cultural Arts Council. Tickets are \$12 per person (\$10 for CAC members, seniors and students). Door prizes include an unique handmade hat rack created by Jerry Maxwell and a framed and autographed poster, "Hitting the Trail," commemorating the 2009 Georgia Cowboy Poets Gathering. In conjunction with the ticketed evening performance, Georgia cowboy poets will also perform in the Douglas County schools, celebrating frontier life with songs, stories and poetry.

For the Saturday night performance, Douglas County Cowboy Poets founders Charlie Holloway and Joel Hayes have organized a fun-filled evening, "Hitting the Trail." In addition to the Polk County Pioneers, the showcased performers in 2009 include: cowboy poet Bill Mattison from Colbert, Georgia; guitarist Bill Turnipseed who lives in Douglas County, Charlie Holloway who authored *Old Saddles & Good Advice* and who is as well and widely known and respected for his traditional cow camp cooking as for his poems; Joel Hayes who is known as the father of Georgia Cowboy Poetry and who has performed at every Douglas County Cowboy Poets Gathering since the first one held at Hudson's by the Lake in 1997; chuck wagon cook and working cowboy Frank Wood who has been writing cowboy poetry for the past thirty years; and author and professor David Fillingim who now lives in Rome, Georgia, where he often performs traditional country, western and gospel music. More Georgia Cowboy Poets are also expected to perform at the 13th Annual Douglas County Cowboy Poets Gathering, and this year as every year no doubt the Gathering will include some surprise guests.

"It is definitely lucky thirteen for us this year," stated Laura Lieberman, CAC's Executive Director, commenting, "This year's Georgia Cowboy Poets Gathering display and show, 'Hitting the Trail,' is going to be terrific! The Arts Council is very proud of the Douglas County Cowboy Poets group, and their unique contributions to our community. We commend their Cowboy Poets founders -- Joel Hayes and Charlie Holloway -- for celebrating American values and Western culture here in West Georgia for more than a decade. We hope everyone will join us in celebrating Cowboy Poetry in our community!"

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13TH ANNUAL COWBOY POETS GATHERING

Cowboys and cowgirls are ever-popular American icons, and folklorists trace the practice of composing verse about life and work on the range back to the trail drive era after the Civil War. Most of this nation's first cowboys, the cowboys of the trail drives during the late 1800s, had Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and Gaelic roots. Their distinctive lingo and their songs and poems were largely based on traditions of British balladry. Ever since those early days, their poetry has circulated orally and in print, sometimes anonymously but often with a known author. Many of these verses are still recited and sung today. The American cowboy culture is a fascinating amalgam of Irish storytelling, Scottish seafaring and cattle tending, Moorish and Spanish horsemanship, European cavalry traditions, African improvisation and Native American experience.

The modern Cowboy Poets movement began in 1979 when the Library of Congress and National Endowment for the Arts convened a meeting of American folklorists where Arizona folklorist Jim Griffith began to develop the idea of a national gathering of cowboy poets. The first Cowboy Poets Gathering was held in 1985 in Elko, Nevada; more than 8,000 people now attend that event which produces a \$5.5 million impact on the local economy each year. There are now more than 150 Cowboy Poets Gatherings around the U.S. The Douglasville celebration of cowboy life and culture is the tenth such annual gathering in Douglasville, Georgia sponsored by the Cultural Arts Council in partnership with the Douglas County Cowboy Poets, which is a satellite organization of the Arts Council.

The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is located at 8652 Campbellton Street in downtown Douglasville, Georgia. The Mashburn Center for the Performing Arts Center at Douglas County High School is just across the street. Douglasville is 18 miles west of Atlanta; from I-20 West, take exit 36 (Chapel Hill), turn right off the exit onto Campbellton Street; the high school is about ½ mile on your left. Contact the Cultural Arts Council for further information, directions and to purchase tickets 770-949-2787.

(PLEASE NOTE: Photographs of last year's Cowboy Poets Gathering performers are available upon request. Contact Laura C. Lieberman at 770-949-2787 or culturedirector@earthlink.net.)

THE CULTURAL ARTS COUNCIL OF DOUGLASVILLE/DOUGLAS COUNTY

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