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For more information:

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**DOUGLASVILLE'S 14TH ANNUAL GEORGIA COWBOY POETS GATHERING:
"OUR HEROES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN COWBOYS"**

Douglasville, Georgia – The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is pleased to sponsor its 14th annual Georgia Cowboy Poets Gathering at Chapel Hill High School on Saturday, March 6, 2010. The evening performance begins at 7 p.m. Showcasing local performers and members of the Douglas County Cowboy Poets as well as West Georgia musicians who will sing and yodel, playing guitar, fiddle and harmonica 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 framed and autographed posters, "Our Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys," commemorating the 2010 Georgia Cowboy Poets Gathering.

For the Saturday night performance, Douglas County Cowboy Poets founders Charlie Holloway and Joel Hayes have organized a fun-filled evening of song, rhyme and verse, "Our Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys." Showcased performers in 2010 include cowboy poets Bill Mattison from Colbert, Georgia, Kenny McClure from Polk 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, and 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. The gathering's master of ceremonies Frank B. Wood has been performing cowboy poetry for the past forty-five years. The 14th Georgia Cowboy Poets gathering will feature musical performances by guitarist Bill Turnipseed, fiddler Thomas Ingram, author and musician David Fillingim from Rome. This year the Georgia Cowboy Poets want to welcome young cowboy musician and singer Montana Smith and Matt Ward from Bluffington, Georgia and harmonica player and poet Justin Hicks from Jacksonville, Florida. More Georgia Cowboy Poets are also expected to perform at the 14th Annual Douglas County Cowboy Poets Gathering, and this year as every year no doubt the Gathering will include some surprise guests including members of Sheriff Mac Abercrombie's "Barn Rats."

"If your cowboy heroes came from movies in the form of the singing cowboy of the B Westerns (like Gene Autry and Roy Rogers, or the action movie cowboys like John Wayne or Randolph Scott), we will try to jog your memory of them," comments Marina Ackerman who coordinated last year's outstanding 13th gathering, continuing about this year's event. "Or if your cowboy heroes are among the rodeo champions (for example, Jim Shoulders, Larry Mahan and Ty Murray), we hope to take you to the blood, sweat and tears of the rodeo arena. And of course we will emphasize the working cowboys of the plains, ranges and ranches."

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. It has been ever since those early days that 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 10th 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. Chapel Hill High School is located at 4899 Chapel Hill Road, Douglasville 30135. Douglasville is 18 miles west of Atlanta; from I-20 West, take exit 36 (Chapel Hill), follow signs to Chapel Hill Road staying left off the interstate and then turn right off the exit ramp onto Chapel Hill Road; the high school is about 5.5 miles south of the interstate on your right. 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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