



RELEASE

**PLAIN PEOPLE OF PENNSYLVANIA TO BE DISCUSSED AT
PENN STATE PUBLIC BROADCASTING COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

Discussion is free and open to the public.

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. (October 30, 2006) — Penn State Public Broadcasting and Research/Penn State's Research Unplugged series are hosting a Common Ground Lobby Talk called "Plain People of Pennsylvania" at 7 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 6 in the lobby of the Outreach Building in Innovation Park. Members of the community are invited to join in this open forum, which will explore the beliefs and traditions of the complex cultures of Old Order Mennonite, Amish and Brethren folk.

Experts from Penn State, Elizabethtown College and Messiah College will host a community conversation about the cultural mosaic of the plain people of Pennsylvania. The talk will be an open discussion, welcoming questions and comments from the audience.

Included on the panel is Donald Kraybill, distinguished professor and senior fellow of sociology and religious studies at Elizabethtown College. Kraybill's expertise was used in numerous news reports from NPR, "The Washington Post," Reuters and others during the days and weeks that followed the murders of five young Amish girls on Oct. 1, 2006.

In addition to Kraybill, members of the panel include Stephen Scott, member of the Old Order River Brethren and administrative assistant in the Young Center at Elizabethtown College, David Weaver-Zercher, associate professor of American religious history at Messiah College, Richard Page, associate professor of German and linguistics at Penn State and Julia Kasdorf, associate professor of English at Penn State. Moderating the discussion will be Patty Satalia, producer/host at WPSU-TV/FM.

Common Ground Lobby Talks are productions of WPSU in partnership with Penn State Public Broadcasting's Public Service Media Study Group. The Public Service Media Study Group, which began in spring 2006 with partial funding by a grant from the National Science Foundation, is comprised of faculty members, graduate students, community members and WPSU TV/FM professionals. The group's goal is to provide a forum for interchange and exploration of the issues faced by public media and higher education as both reexamine a shared commitment to public engagement.

Research/Penn State's Research Unplugged series has been modeled after Café Scientifique, a university-town phenomenon that began in the U.K. The concept is to create an informal forum, open to all, for exploring ideas—to foster public dialogue and energize conversations about issues that matter. Penn State's Research Unplugged series gathers Wednesdays at noon in the gallery of the Penn State Downtown Theatre.

Penn State Public Broadcasting serves central Pennsylvania with programming, educational services and community outreach. Its public media services produce, acquire and distribute programs that address local interests and reflect the diverse cultural, political, geographic and demographic characteristics of an audience within central Pennsylvania.

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