



News release

May 12, 2016

Media contact: Lee Colony 262.564.2512

262.359.0798 (cell)

**Gateway receives grant to host
NEA Big Read project**
'True Grit' focus of Gateway's effort

Gateway Technical College has been named the recipient of a \$14,000 grant to host the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read Project in Kenosha County, Racine County and Walworth County between September 2016 and June 2017.

Gateway will focus on the 1968 novel "True Grit" by Charles Portis for its part of this national effort. Each grantee is allowed to select the published work they would like to focus on for their specific area. Gateway activities will take place Oct. 7 through Nov. 5.

Gateway District Library Manager Gary Flynn said college officials are excited to receive the NEA Big Read grant, and for the opportunity to work with community partners to promote reading.

"We chose 'True Grit' because we liked the idea of featuring a strong, idealistic heroine with firm moral beliefs as the main character," said Flynn. "In addition, 'True Grit' provides for worthy deep discussion because of the many themes and side topics found within the narrative.

“As with any NEA Big Read Grant, the ultimate goal is to encourage a diverse audience to engage in reading and participate in activities to make this a rich experience for all.”

Gateway will begin its NEA Big Read 2016 with a kickoff October 7 featuring nationally acclaimed speaker Jay Jennings.

“I have the opportunity to travel around the country and see the way the arts can inspire, allow for reflection and create new experiences,” Jane Chu, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, said. “I look forward to the creative ways these 77 organizations will bring their communities together around a great work of literature through their participation in the NEA Big Read.”

A variety of activities will be offered throughout Gateway communities through Nov. 5. Specifics will be released in late summer.

Book discussions will take a central role in The NEA Big Read 2016, with the focus of bringing the community together to discuss the timely themes of the book. A total of 10 to 15 discussions will be held at various community locations throughout the three counties in Gateway’s project, making use of local business establishments such as coffee shops, libraries, literacy councils, and local organizations whenever possible.

Flynn points out that it is Gateway’s hope to draw in devoted readers as well as non-readers and non-traditional library users by strategically locating discussions and making Spanish language materials available.

For more information about the NEA Big Read, please visit www.neabigread.org.

Gateway Technical College collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

Managed by Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read offers grants to support innovative community reading programs designed around a single book. The program supports organizations across the country in developing community-wide reading programs which encourage reading and participation by diverse audiences. Organizations selected to participate in the NEA Big Read receive a grant, access to online training resources and opportunities, and educational and promotional materials designed to support widespread community involvement.

XXX