



news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Country Crush to Premiere on Western Reserve PBS

KENT, Ohio — Thursday, Sept. 2, 2010 — **Country Crush**, a new documentary that will premiere on Western Reserve PBS (WNEO 45.1/WEO 49.1) on Tuesday, Sept. 7, at 9 p.m., is the story of the strange combine demolition derby at the Columbiana County Fair. The production also will air on Western Reserve Public Media's Fusion channel (WNEO 45.2/WEO 49.2) on Wednesday, Sept. 8, at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. and on Saturday, Sept. 11, at 8 p.m.

A staple at Columbiana County's fair since 1992, the combine demolition derby is a locally cultivated sport in which drivers of massive combine harvesters crash their machines in a competition that involves grinding and tearing metal, smoking engines and punctured tires. The derby lasts for several heats, and the last machine moving wins.

"I think these machines are so gigantic and so expensive when a farmer buys them new, that the thought of somebody intentionally smashing one into another one strikes some people — I'd say most people — as lunacy," notes Columbiana County fair board member and derby announcer Don Humphreys. Humphreys serves as documentary narrator and is also one of the community members featured in the documentary.

Country Crush was filmed during the 2007 fair season and spotlights drivers as they prepare their combines for competition. Featured drivers past and present are as follows:

- Mike Cianni, Lisbon Jason Raymond, Hanoverton
- Justin Fraser, Salem Nate Smith, Hanoverton
- Matt Johnston, Alliance Scott Smith, Lisbon
- Joe McKarns, Lisbon Tom Vickroy, deceased, Lisbon

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The documentary is directed and produced by Molly Merryman, Ph.D., an associate professor in the department of Sociology at Kent State University. Her last documentary, *Invisible Struggles: Stories of Northern Segregation*, aired on Western Reserve PBS in 2007.

Interviews and derby footage are punctuated by the sounds of Kentucky Overflow, a Dayton-based band that scored original music for the documentary. “Kentucky Overflow creates a unique synthesis of rock, bluegrass, country and roots, which I thought would be the perfect match for the men featured in this documentary,” says Merryman. “I was delighted when the band decided to develop original music for the documentary.”

About Western Reserve Public Media

Western Reserve Public Media (formerly PBS 45 & 49) is owned and operated by Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc., a private, nonprofit corporation and consortium of Kent State University, The University of Akron and Youngstown State University. A trusted community resource, Western Reserve Public Media uses the power of commercial-free television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire.

Western Reserve PBS, a service of the organization, is the only broadcast television service that reaches all of northeast Ohio. It is available to 1.8 million households and 4.4 million people in the Cleveland and Youngstown designated market areas. In an average week, over 500,000 households tune in. The organization also operates three standard definition channels, Fusion (WNEO.2/WEAO.2), MHz Worldview (WNEO.3/WEAO.3) and V-me (WNEO.4/WEAO.4).

Through funding from eTech Ohio, Western Reserve Public Media provides K-12 educational technology training and instructional television programming to 21,500 educators and 256,700 students in eight Ohio counties. For more information about the organization, visit www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org or call 1-800-554-4549.

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