



**ArtReach St. Croix**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Festival Theatre to bring “The Grapes of Wrath” theatre tour to Prescott and Hastings as part of The Big Read in the St. Croix Valley**

As part of **The Big Read in the St. Croix Valley**, St. Croix Festival Theatre is bringing a scene from production of “The Grapes of Wrath,” adapted by Frank Galati from the novel by John Steinbeck, to Prescott and Hastings on Sunday, April 3.

The play follows the story of the Joad family as they are forced from their family farm in Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl and migrate to California in search of work, sustenance, and a means of survival. For the tour, Festival Theatre’s actors will perform the first scene of the play depicting the Joad family’s hopefulness for the journey ahead.

“The opportunity to see ‘The Grapes of Wrath’ is special since it allows audiences to experience what can happen when environmental changes impact, and often uproot, the lives of average people,” says Mary Scheide, library manager at Pleasant Hill Library. “We are excited to host the theatre tour in our community as part of The Big Read.”

The play, “The Grapes of Wrath,” was adapted by Galati in 1988 and debuted at Steppenwolf Theatre Company of Chicago that same year. In 1990, it was performed at The Cort Theater on Broadway and went on to win the Tony Award for Best Play.

The free public performances will take place on Sunday, April 3 at:

- **Prescott United Church of Christ, 206 Locust St. N., Prescott, WI at 3:00 p.m.**  
Hosted by The Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center and Prescott United Church of Christ
- **Hastings Arts Center, 216 4th Street E., Hastings, MN at 7:00 p.m.**  
Hosted by Hastings Prescott Area Arts Council and Pleasant Hill Library

The full production of “The Grapes of Wrath” will open Saturday, April 9 at 7:30 p.m. at Franklin Square Black Box in St. Croix Falls, WI, with performances continuing until April 24. Date, times and ticket information is available at [www.festivaltheatre.org](http://www.festivaltheatre.org).

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Visit [www.ValleyReads.org](http://www.ValleyReads.org) for dates and times of The Big Read events hosted throughout the St. Croix Valley.

ArtReach St. Croix announced in May 2015 that it was one of 75 organizations nationwide to receive a grant to host The Big Read, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. This year, programming will focus on themes related to the Steinbeck classic *The Grapes of Wrath*.

As a regional arts agency serving the lower St. Croix Valley, ArtReach is working in collaboration with arts organizations and libraries throughout the six county region to provide a range of activities associated with featured book. Theatre, music, visual arts, book discussion and other activities will take place in April 2016.

**ArtReach St. Croix** is a non-profit organization whose mission is to connect the St. Croix Valley community and the arts. ArtReach sponsors community arts events and supports the work of artists and other arts organizations, and provides arts leadership within the St. Croix Valley community.

The **National Endowment for the Arts** was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To join the discussion on how art works, visit the NEA at [arts.gov](http://arts.gov).

**Arts Midwest** promotes creativity, nurtures cultural leadership, and engages people in meaningful arts experiences, bringing vitality to Midwest communities and enriching people's lives. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest connects the arts to audiences throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six non-profit regional arts organizations in the United States, Arts Midwest's history spans more than 25 years. For more information, please visit [artsmidwest.org](http://artsmidwest.org).