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# STORYCORPS, THE NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, TO KICK OFF AMERICAN TOUR FROM WASHINGTON, DC

## **StoryCorps Launches Two Mobile Recording Booths From the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to Travel the U.S. Capturing Stories of Ordinary Americans.**

NEW YORK, Apr. 26, 2005—This spring marks the national launch of the acclaimed oral history project StoryCorps, created by award-winning NPR documentary producer and Mac Arthur “Genius” Dave Isay. The opening of two mobile recording booths, contained in Airstream trailers, signifies StoryCorps' national expansion. The MobileBooths' first stop in their one-year tour collecting stories from across the United States will be Washington, DC.

StoryCorps is a national initiative to instruct and inspire individuals to record oral histories and create meaningful personal experiences for the participants. With 2,000 stories already collected from the project's first year, StoryCorps, the largest oral history project ever undertaken, will collect more than 250,000 interviews over the next ten years. Traveling to every corner of the United States, the project will be documenting everyday history and the unique stories of grassroots America.

Two StoryCorps MobileBooths will arrive in Washington on May 19, where they will be stationed in front of the Library of Congress for 10 days. From Washington, the MobileBooths will set out in opposite directions across the country—one taking an Eastern route and the other covering the Western states. Visits in each city or town will last between two and three weeks, with about 100 interview slots available at each location. This inaugural tour will last one year and stop at nearly 45 cities. During the first six months of the tour, the StoryCorps MobileBooths will visit 25 cities and 16 states.

The MobileBooths have been sponsored by NPR (NPR), the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and Saturn Corp., the automobile company.

In each city where the MobileBooths stop, StoryCorps will partner with a local public radio station, which will air a selection of the local stories and create additional programming around the project. Selected segments will also air nationally on NPR's *Morning Edition*.

At each MobileBooth, a trained facilitator will help create a question list and handle the technical aspects of the recording. At the end of a forty-minute session, the participants walk away with a CD of their interview. With their permission, a second copy will be sent to the American

Folklife Center (AFC) at the Library of Congress where it becomes part of a high quality digital archive. StoryCorps is the first born-digital audio collection for AFC, the largest oral narrative collection in the nation. This collection will eventually grow into an oral history of America.

“Over the past year and a half, we've seen the profound effect StoryCorps has had on the lives of those who have participated in the project, and we've seen the power that these stories have had on the

millions who have heard them,” said Isay. “We believe that listening is an act of love. StoryCorps will engage communities, teach participants to become better listeners, foster intergenerational communication, and help Americans appreciate the strength in the stories of everyday people they find all around them.”

"We are delighted to be able to sponsor this amazing project," said Jay Kernis, NPR's Senior Vice President for Programming. "StoryCorps makes the statement that the experiences of everyday people are as important as those of elected officials, experts and those who have achieved a degree of celebrity." Listeners have been moved by the honesty and depth of emotion of the extraordinary stories from the StoryCorps Grand Central Station booth over past 18 months and we expect that this response will be even greater as they hear stories from around the country."

“CPB and StoryCorps share in the mission to inform, enlighten and enrich the public,” said Ken Ferree Acting President and CEO. “CPB is proud to support this creative and engaging project, which will capture stories that families will cherish for generations.”

“StoryCorps recognizes the importance of every citizen to our culture and history,” said Saturn General Manager Jill Lajdziak. “This project is a natural fit for Saturn as we follow a similar approach — putting ‘people first’ in everything we do.”

“StoryCorps will provide America with important social documentation on a grassroots, nationwide scale that mirrors what the historic Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Writers' Project accomplished more than half a century ago,” said Peggy Bulger, Director of the American Folklife Center. “We are delighted to be partners with StoryCorps and to house a new generation of America's stories.”

StoryCorps opened its first StoryBooth, a freestanding soundproof recording studio, in New York City's Grand Central Terminal in October 2003. A second StoryBooth will open this March on the site of the World Trade Center. Over the course of the 10-year project, StoryCorps plans to open StoryBooths—both mobile and stationary—across the country. StoryCorps is a project of Sound Portraits Productions, a non-profit public radio documentary production company founded by Isay.

Individuals can reserve interview slots at [storycorps.net](http://storycorps.net), an online resource center that includes a reservation and payment system, step-by-step technical instructions on how to edit, sample recorded interviews, a ‘question helper’ utility and troubleshooting guide.

## About the AFC

The [American Folklife Center](http://www.folklife.org/) was created by Congress in 1976 and placed at the Library of Congress to “preserve and present American folklife” through programs of research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, public programs, and training. The center incorporates the Archive of Folk Culture, which was established in the Library in 1928 and is now one of the largest collections of ethnographic material from the United States and around the world. The Archive of Folk Culture will be the repository for the StoryCorps collection.

## About CPB

[CPB](http://www.cpb.org/), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967 develops educational public radio, television, and online services for the American people. The Corporation is the industry's largest single source of funds for national public television and radio program development and production. CPB, a grant making organization, funds more than 1,000 public radio and television stations. [www.cpb.org](http://www.cpb.org).

## About NPR

[NPR](#) is renowned for journalistic excellence and standard-setting news and entertainment programming. A privately supported, non-profit, membership organization, NPR serves growing audience of more than 22 million Americans each week via more than 770 public radio stations. International partners in cable, satellite and short-wave services make NPR programming accessible anywhere in the world. With original online content and audio streaming, npr.org offers hourly newscasts, special features and seven years of archived audio and information.

## **About Saturn Corporation**

[Saturn](#), a division of General Motors Corp., offers a line of vehicles including the compact Ion Quad Coupe and sedan, the Vue sport utility vehicle and the Relay crossover sport van. Operating with a philosophy of “People first,” Saturn has earned a reputation for superior customer satisfaction throughout the vehicle purchase and ownership experience. The brand is in the midst of an ambitious product expansion, with plans to double its portfolio by the end of 2006. During that year, Saturn will introduce three new vehicles—the 2007 Sky roadster, a new midsize sedan and a midsize SUV.

## **About Sound Portraits Productions**

Sound Portraits Productions, a non-profit company based in New York City, is one of the country's most acclaimed documentary production houses. Under the direction of MacArthur Fellow Dave Isay, its mission is to tell the stories of ordinary Americans. Sound Portraits has accomplished this goal primarily through the creation of dozens of award-winning radio programs broadcast on NPR's *All Things Considered*. Whether on the radio, in print, or on the Web, Sound Portraits is committed to producing innovative works of lasting educational, cultural, and artistic value. To hear Sound Portraits past radio programs, visit [soundportraits.org](http://soundportraits.org).

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