

County museum, Wabash library launch program

The Wabash County Museum has been awarded a Community Read grant of \$750 from Indiana Humanities to participate in a statewide read of Jean Thompson's "The Year We Left Home." Twenty-eight other communities and students at four Indiana colleges will be reading the book as part of "One State / One Story: The Year We Left Home."

In partnership with the Wabash Carnegie Public Library, the two groups are planning a full year of programming around the theme "Explore Home." The goal of this programming is to encourage residents of Wabash County to discuss the current challenges facing rural America and how to make Wabash County resilient through the challenges facing small towns.

"As our communities continue to discuss topics such as population decline, education, and economic development it is imperative that we explore the history and stories of our communities and apply them to making decisions and starting conversations about the future," said Mitch Figert, president and CEO of the Wabash County

Museum. "This partnership with the Wabash Carnegie Public Library will further strengthen the local presence and conversation around local history and humanities."

The grant will provide 50 books and assorted materials like bookmarks and posters to promote the programs. The Wabash Carnegie Public Library will host a series of book discussions, beginning with Jean Thompson's "The Year We Left Home." Additional programming will include a monthly speaker series at the museum, a #Shelfie challenge for students K-12, a temporary exhibit at the museum, community discussions, and more. The library and museum will release details on upcoming events in the near future.

"The themes explored in Jean Thompson's novel are the topics already close to many residents in Wabash. The discussion of our past and how it ties into our future is important and we are thrilled to partner with the museum to facilitate that conversation in a variety of ways," said Rachel Castle, Community Outreach Coordinator of the

Wabash Carnegie Public Library.

Jean Thompson's 2011 novel offers a sweeping, multigenerational look at life in the Midwest over the past several decades. The story follows the Erickson family through the many changes affecting American life at the end of the 20th

century asking readers to consider the enduring, uniting power of place — why we choose to leave and when we decide to come home.

"Indiana Humanities is in the midst of a two-year initiative encouraging Hoosiers to read, think and talk about urban and rural dif-

ferences and dynamics," said Keira Amstutz, president and CEO of Indiana Humanities. "We think 'The Year We Left Home' will resonate with Hoosiers, and spark conversations about Midwestern life today and our relationships to the places we call home."