



NEWS RELEASE

Media contacts: David Holt
(405) 850.4181

Sue Ellen Reiman
(405) 235.3700

Sam Sims, APR
(405) 413.8616

OKLAHOMA SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK'S CENTENNIAL PRODUCTION OF *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* OPENS THURSDAY

OKLAHOMA CITY (Oct. 30, 2007) – Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park's centennial production of *The Grapes of Wrath* opens Thursday, Nov. 1, at 8 p.m. at Stage Center's Tolbert Theatre. The production is presented by Devon Energy.

Designated as an official Oklahoma Centennial event, the adaptation from John Steinbeck's classic novel will bring the gritty reality of the Dust Bowl and the "Okie" pilgrimage to California into theatrical life. Daily performances will run Nov. 1-4 and 8-11 at Stage Center located in downtown Oklahoma City.

The cast includes John Brumley as Tom Joad, Matt Cheek as Jim Casy, Sue Ellen Reiman as Granma, Shawn Elmore as Grampa, Hal Kohlman as Pa Joad, Brenda Williams as Ma Joad, Amber Brockhaus as Ruthie Joad, Leone Ghezzi as Winfield Joad, Brent Weber as Uncle John, and Jeff Montague as Al Joad.

"Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park is thrilled to present this Centennial event in the heart of downtown with the support of one of Oklahoma City's finest corporate citizens," said David Holt, president of Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park's Board of Directors. "We are grateful to the Oklahoma Centennial Commission, and we are grateful on multiple levels to Devon Energy for their continued support of our organization."

Set during the Great Depression, *The Grapes of Wrath* portrays a farming family that is driven from their home by drought, economic hardship and changes in the agriculture industry. In a nearly hopeless situation, the family journeys to California along with thousands of Oklahomans in search of land, jobs and dignity.

"This story pays tribute to Oklahoma's rich history," said Larry Nichols, Devon's chairman and chief executive officer. "We believe the production sends an important message about the resiliency and compassion of Oklahomans, and we are delighted to help bring our heritage to life in downtown Oklahoma City."

The Grapes of Wrath tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students, seniors and groups, and are on sale at all Civic Center Box Office Locations or by calling 405-297-2264, convenience charges may apply. Tickets may also be purchased online at <http://www.oklahomashakespeare.com>.

Student matinees are available on Nov. 8 and 9 at 11 a.m., please call the OSP main office at 405-235-3700 or e-mail info@oklahomashakespeare.com for reservation information.

In addition to Devon's contribution, Oklahoma winery Grape Ranch also is supporting the production and has created a signature wine for the occasion, entitled "The Grapes of Wrath." The wine is available for purchase at select liquor stores in the metro area, and a percentage of the profits benefit Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park.

The Grapes of Wrath opens Thursday cont.

Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park was founded in 1985 by current Artistic Director Kathryn McGill and the late Jack O'Meara. The organization is supported in part by Oklahoma Arts Council; Allied Arts; the Kirkpatrick Family Fund; College of Arts, Media & Design at the University of Central Oklahoma; Frontier Country Marketing Association; Devon Energy; Chesapeake Energy; OGE Energy Corp; National Endowment of the Arts; Cox Communications; Oklahoma Community Theatre Association; AT&T; Inasmuch Foundation; Oklahoma City Community Foundation; and Cardinal Engineering. For more information, visit <http://www.oklahomashakespeare.com>.

###