

## **“The Dust Bowl” to Premiere November 18 and 21 on NET1 and NET-HD**

“The Dust Bowl,” a new two-part, four-hour documentary by Ken Burns, airs on NET1 and NET-HD with part one on Sunday, Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. CT and part two on Wednesday, Nov. 21 at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. The program chronicles the environmental catastrophe that, throughout the 1930s, destroyed the farmlands of the Great Plains, turned prairies into deserts and unleashed a pattern of massive, deadly dust storms that for many seemed to herald the end of the world. It was the worst manmade ecological disaster in American history.

“The Dust Bowl” tells the story of the farming boom in the early 20th century that transformed the grassland of the southern plains into wheat fields. Once a drought hit in 1931, winds began picking up soil from the open fields and grew into dust storms of biblical proportions. Each year for nearly a decade, the storms grew more ferocious and more frequent, sweeping up millions of tons of earth, killing crops and livestock, threatening to turn the southern plains into a Sahara, even spreading the dust clear across the country. Children developed fatal “dust pneumonia,” business owners unable to cope with the financial ruin committed suicide and thousands of desperate Americans were torn from their homes and forced on the road in an exodus unlike anything the United States had ever seen.

“The Dust Bowl” is also a story of heroic perseverance against enormous odds: families finding ways to survive and hold on to their land, national and local government programs that kept hungry families afloat and a partnership between government agencies and farmers to develop new farming and conservation methods.

“The Dust Bowl” chronicles this critical moment in American history in all its complexities and profound human drama. It is, in part, oral history, using compelling interviews with 26 survivors of those hard times--what will probably be the last recorded testimony of the generation that lived through the Dust Bowl. Filled with seldom-seen movie footage, previously unpublished photographs, the songs of Woody Guthrie and the observations of two remarkable women who left behind eloquent written accounts, the program is also a historical accounting of what happened and why during the 1930s on the southern plains.

**RELEASE WRITTEN BY:** Ann Tillery, 402-472-9333, ext. 391, or [atillery@netad.unl.edu](mailto:atillery@netad.unl.edu)