



Renfro Valley Entertainment Center
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Renfro Valley Entertains in the Great Saltpetre Cave

On Saturday, August 20th, at 12:00pm the Great Saltpetre Cave in Rockcastle County Kentucky will be open to the public for a very unique experience! In conjunction with Renfro Valley Entertainment Center and the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy, the historic *Music in the Mountain* will be presented. The Renfro Valley entertainers will be performing 90 minutes of the very popular "Front Porch Pickin" show in the large Echo Auditorium from deep inside the cave. Just the way it happened over 40 years ago.

A man of vision, Renfro Valley's founder, John Lair, bought the southern half of the Great Saltpetre Cave around 1940 from the Richard Mullins family, who retained ownership of the northern half. Richard Mullins great-grandfather, Calloway Mullins, bought the cave around 1860, for a horse, a rifle and \$50.

Mr. Lair saw many possible uses for the cave and since the early 1940's, was instrumental in its development and commercialization. By 1944, after building a gravel road to the entrance, John Lair advertised the Great Saltpetre Cave as...accessible 8 miles by car or 16 miles by horseback from Renfro Valley.

Over the years, Mr. Lair held several shows in the cave. The first live broadcast from the cave was sponsored by Ballard and Ballard over the CBS Network. On Thursday, February 21, 1946, at 7:15, the Renfro Valley Folk's morning program was broadcast from the cave as part of the 155th anniversary celebration of the Renfro Valley Settlement.

Mr. Lair saw Echo Auditorium as probably the most natural underground theater in America. At 155-feet long by 65-feet at its widest point with a 50-foot domed ceiling, the room's acoustics are perfect. Microphones are never needed for any stage performance.

With a seating capacity of over 1,500 people and a year-round temperature of 58 degrees, its little wonder this “auditorium” was a favorite meeting place since its discovery. For the past six years, the 300 acres that make up The Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve has been owned by the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy (RKC), non-profit organization. This is the only community based non-profit organization in Kentucky dedicated to protecting cave and karst environments and is made up of the same group of volunteers who have managed the Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve for over 25 years. RKC’s mission is to protect caves through wise stewardship and ownership. The group recently acquired another cave property in the area to protect its significant bat population.

For tickets and information call the Renfro Valley Box Office at 1-800-765-7464 or you can purchase your tickets for this special show online at the newly redesigned Renfro Valley website, www.renfrovalley.com Please allow 30 minutes before the show to enter the cave and to be seated. The cave is a “Naturally cool” 58 degrees, so please dress accordingly. Restroom facilities and handicap parking will be provided along with a shuttle to take guests from the lower parking lot to the upper parking lot to avoid the stairs. Don’t miss your chance to experience this very unique and historic performance!

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