

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

January 31, 2012

## **Iowa's Prairie Heritage on Display—A Special Traveling Exhibit**

**Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center, Sioux City: February 2 – March 25**

Americans and millions of people around the world will sit down to a meal sometime today courtesy of the prairies that once covered much of Iowa. The Woodbury County Conservation Foundation invites visitors to experience the story of our prairie heritage through the exhibit ***“Tallgrass Prairie – Past, Present and Future”***; on display at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center from February 2 – March 25.

The “Tallgrass Prairie” exhibit was produced by the Iowa Association of Naturalists with funds from the Resource Enhancement and Protection – Conservation Education Program (REAP – CEP), Living Roadway Trust Fund, Pheasants Forever, Iowa Trust for Local Conservation, the Tallgrass Prairie Center – UNI, and Truax Company. Locally, the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation provided additional funding for this traveling exhibit.

“We want visitors to leave with a better understanding of the story of Iowa’s prairie heritage and to become aware of, enjoy and take action to enhance prairies in Iowa today,” noted Anita Fisher, a member of the exhibit design team. “Protected remnants in a pioneer cemetery, native prairie flowers in a garden, and strips of reconstructed prairies along our roadways – these are all ways Iowans are saving a part of our heritage as well as important habitat.”

Hands-on displays and interactive components will engage visitors in learning about the prairie landscape and native plant species. Area residents are also invited to become personally involved in the preservation and restoration of the prairie ecosystem through educational programs hosted at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

The public can learn more about birds of the prairie during the exhibit opening program on Thursday, February 2. Join Craig Hensley, Naturalist and Educator, as he presents ***“A Prairie Bird Primer: The Identification and Natural History of our Grassland Songbirds.”*** Hensley will share his knowledge of birds and the prairie during this special program. Also making its

debut will be the American Kestrel, a live falcon that is now permanently housed at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center. The prairie program begins at 7:30 p.m. and is sponsored by the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation and the Loess Hills Audubon Society.

\*\*\*\*\* Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP): Invest in Iowa, our outdoors, our heritage, our people. REAP is supported by the state of Iowa, providing funding to public and private partners for natural and cultural resource projects, including water quality, wildlife habitat, soil conservation, parks, trails, historic preservation and more." The Iowa Association of Naturalists promotes education about the natural and cultural environments. \*\*\*\*\*

For more information about the Prairie exhibit and programs contact Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center at 712-258-0838.

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