

# Lonesome Pine Regional Library

Wise, VA

**Grant request: \$13,830**

**Book selection:** *Burning Bright*

**Financial information:**

Previous fiscal year expenses: \$2,329,693

Current fiscal year expenses: \$2,317,060

**Project information:**

Proposed programming start date: 03-27-2019

Proposed programming end date: 04-30-2019

Number of partner organizations: 49

Number of book discussions: 40

Total number of events: 74

Anticipated total participants: 4,650

**Please describe your community where programming will take place.**

Roots run deep in the Southern Appalachian Mountains where we serve 108,936 residents in a four-county region of southwest Virginia. The area can best be described as a patchwork quilt of small towns and isolated communities that are only beginning to embrace mainstream America through exposure to media and participation in cultural programs. Literacy rates and educational levels rank among the lowest in the nation while poverty rates are among the highest. Persons living in poverty equates to 23.5% vs the national 12.7% ranking, while the median household income is \$36,352, an alarmingly \$22,687 less than the \$59,039 national median. The region lacks a well-developed education culture as large numbers of residents fail to finish high school; college completion rates are also sobering with only 14.4% holding bachelors' degrees, far below the national average of 36%. NEA Big Read will positively impact the community as the written word has the power to unite and transform individuals.

**Why did you choose this book?**

*Burning Bright* is the perfect selection for a NEA Big Read in our library region. This is an opportunity to highlight a regional author who is one of us and who understands the complexities and complications of the Appalachian identity. Ron Rash's stories will resonate in our communities because they are about us and our lives, our unique culture, and the mountains which have played an integral part in shaping who we are. Rash's portrayals are full-bodied and unfiltered portrayals of people surviving through poverty and hard times. These are stories about good people who may react to circumstances and problems in unconventional and sometimes disturbing ways. Whether actions taken are right or wrong, his characters are motivated by a sense of doing what is thought to be right using whatever limited resources they may have. This book has captured the essential approach to life that defines the people of Appalachia and it should generate lively discussion across our region.

**What are your goals for this project?**

Our proposal is designed to achieve positive outcomes in regional literacy and promote community awareness and engagement. Literacy will be encouraged through the widespread distribution of our book selection. We will also promote readership through special book-inspired programs and events. We will promote readership of local writers through local writing competitions and hosting a local author book event.

Community awareness will be fostered through community discussions about the book's Appalachian identity theme. Related programs focusing on Appalachian culture, wildlife, and social issues will raise awareness about what is good about our region as well as problem areas. We hope to see an increase in civic engagement through increased donations to area food banks and animal shelters. We also hope to attract more visitors to our libraries who will become more actively engaged as readers and library users through this NEA Big Read.

## Organization Description

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Describe your organization's history, programming, and achievements.

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Lonesome Pine Regional Library traces its beginnings back to 1957 when a trial demonstration library was funded through the Library Services Act of 1956. Enthusiastically received, this trial library resulted in the permanent establishment of public library service in far southwestern Virginia. LPRL was formally established on April 2, 1964 when several counties joined forces, and by 1976, had expanded to include nine branches serving four counties and one city: Wise, Dickenson, Lee, and Scott Counties and the City of Norton. We also serve our citizens through the State's largest books-by-mail outreach service. LRPL continues to help its libraries maximize resources through cost-effective, centrally administered services and assistance. From the beginning, in 1957, it was all about books: books for the people of the mountain region. Today the library is still about books and much more. The major strength of the library system is the combined holdings that are shared among all libraries in the regional system for the benefit of the 46,556 registered library cardholders and 108,936 community members. Mission: Lonesome Pine Regional Library will be the cornerstone of the region where children and adults can experience personal enrichment and connect with one another as we: Promote the love of reading; Excel at providing resources to customers of all ages; and Create welcoming spaces for our community. Vision: Lonesome Pine Regional Library is the best place to discover, to learn, to imagine, to smile. Motto: Start Here – Go Anywhere! LRPL offers ongoing programs for citizens of all ages. Preschool programs are held in eight libraries, serving children from birth through age 5: StoryTime, ToddlerTime, and Mother Goose. School children attend Book Buddies & Summer Reading, while curriculum-supported programs assist Home School families. Teens enjoy volunteer opportunities and programs. A variety of adult programs from book clubs to craft events, are offered regularly.

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Describe your organization's experience with presenting community-wide programming that demonstrates an ability to conduct a successful NEA Big Read.

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LPRL has successfully implemented a number of literacy events targeted to children and youth and those that expanded into community-wide events. Since 2008, the Library has been the recipient of four Big Read grants. Citizens explored the mystery genre in Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*; Virginia-born, Willa Cather captured the hearts of our readers in *My Antonia*; through *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, we explored the joys of childhood; and *True Grit* took us on an unforgettable westward journey. Each of these grant awards united citizens in a joint reading of a community-wide book, complemented in several cycles with a children's companion title. During these literary celebrations, LPRL distributed over 4,000 copies of classic literary works and held 472 related programs attended by 15,832 adults and 7,209 children. Our strategy for sustaining community involvement was to blanket the area with the sheer number of quality programs offered in each community. Partnerships continue to thrive as the Library formed long-lasting bonds with colleges, schools, and service agencies. LPRL has also managed similar literacy-related children's grant projects including, five National Endowment of the Humanities, "We the People" Bookshelf grants: *A More Perfect Union*; *Picturing America*; *Created Equal*; *Pursuit of Happiness*; and *Becoming American*. The Library has implemented three Ezra Jack Keats Foundation Minigrants; the Vermont Center for the Book "Growing with Mother Goose"; and the American Library Association Great Stories Club. Each of these involved managing multi-branch programming initiatives with community partnerships. LPRL is recognized as the area's major provider of free library service and information. We stand poised to once again "bring a book to life" for our readers who continue to ask, "When are you going to have the Big Read again?" We will be honored to answer that question affirmatively by being selected as a recipient of NEA Big Read award for 2019.

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## Organizer Biographies

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Outline the key individuals who will plan and implement the programming, including their titles, anticipated roles and responsibilities in your proposed program, and experience or capacity for managing a NEA Big Read. Include partner organizations' staff as applicable.

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- Amy Congo Bond is the Regional Library Director of LPRL. Amy holds a MS in Information Sciences. As a member of the American Library Association, Tennessee Library Association, and Virginia Library Association, Ms. Bond has a vast range of experience in managing presentations and complex projects. Amy has served on the Mountain Empire Community College Foundation Cultural & Humanities Committee since 2007 and, as such, has organized ten successful annual literary festivals. Ms. Bond will oversee the overall implementation of NEA Big Read and will serve as adviser to partnering organizations.

- Julie E. Short, Assistant Director of LPRL serves as the key contact for NEA Big Read application. Mrs. Short holds a MS in Library and Information Studies. She will coordinate all program activities within Lonesome Pine's nine localities, through outreach services, and with all partnering agencies. In addition to coordinating all adult and youth programming services for the library system, she has managed four previous Big Read programs and similar grant-funded literary programs. Mrs. Short will also manage reporting requirements for NEA Big Read grant.

- Christine M. Smith, Branch Librarian, holds a MS in Information Sciences and has participated in four previous Big Read implementations and has previously served as Programming Specialist at LPRL. Chris will oversee various sub-committees and manage and coordinate publicity and media communications.

- Kimberley D. Rose, Branch Librarian, holding a MS in Information Sciences, has coordinated four previous Big Read activities within Dickenson County and has many years of experience in the outreach department, focusing on underserved populations. Kim will manage and coordinate social media campaigns and promotional materials.

- Oma Onedah Stanley, Business Manager of LPRL, holds a BA in Business. Onedah will oversee the budget within LPRL and provide budget oversight and guidance with partnering agency to ensure grant compliance and accuracy of reporting.

- Amy D. Clark, PhD is associate professor of English and Communication Studies at the University of Virginia's College at Wise, where she is the founding director of the Appalachian Writing Project. She is the author of *Success in Hill Country* and was the 2012 recipient of the Jean Ritchie Fellowship in Appalachian Writing from Lincoln Memorial University. Dr. Clark will coordinate NEA Big Read activities at UVa-Wise Center for Appalachian Studies.

- Terence Michael Gilley, PhD is director of library services at Wampler Library, Mountain Empire Community College. Michael has a BA degree in Appalachian studies with a minor in music, a MA degree in folklore and ethnomusicology, a MS in library and information science, and he holds a PhD in Community College Leadership. Dr. Gilley coordinates the Mountain Music School and Home Craft Days on the MECC Campus. He will Coordinate NEA Big Read activities at Mountain Empire Community College.

- Rebecca H. Scott, Program Manager of the Regional Adult Education Program of Lee, Scott, Wise and Norton Public Schools since its inception in 1990, also serves as chair of the Regional Literacy Coordinating Committee. She completed a four term appointment on both the Virginia Board of Education Advisory Committee on Adult Education and the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Advisory Board. Rebecca will coordinate adult learner activities.

- Gillian Huang-Tiller is an associate professor of English in the Department of Language and Literature at The University of Virginia's College at Wise, where she teaches modern and contemporary literature and serves as a faculty advisor to the College's literary journal, the *Jimson Weed*.

- Amy Greear is the Interim Executive Director of the Mountain Empire Community College Foundation established to support cultural and humanities activities in Southwest Virginia.

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## Programming Description

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Describe your programming plans in detail. Provide details on the types of activities, target audiences for those activities, locations, and intended dates. Explain how your activities will engage audiences with your selected book.

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- "Burning Bright" captures the landscape of the Appalachians that will engage our communities as we explore ourselves. The kickoff and programs will be held in late-March thru April, 2019, coinciding with several annual events, National Library Week and the John Fox, Jr. Literary Festival, to cross-promote and reach a broad audience.
  - "Kickoff Keynote Address" will feature author, Ron Rash, who has confirmed his intent to speak at the Fox Literary Festival. This kickoff will feature a reading and book signing in conjunction with two writing competitions to engage student and adult writers. March 27.
  - "Remembering Gary Stewart: His Life and Music" will commemorate the legacy of Gary Stewart who was born and attended school in Jenkins, Kentucky, a town just 18 miles from our headquarters. Stewart, mentioned in *Waiting for the End of the World*, was significant for his distinctive outlaw country/honky-tonk/Southern countrified rock and roll music. April 13.
  - "Stories of the Appalachians" will feature renowned storyteller, Donald Davis, who was born in a Southern Appalachian mountain world rich in home-spun stories. April 24.
  - "Appalachian Authors' Day" will celebrate regional authors who will present and sign copies of their writings. Displays will be exhibited to promote how the written word explores and portrays our culture. April 7.
  - "Panel Discussion" Appalachian Studies professors will discuss quotes and themes penned by the author and will delve into a treasure trove of "mountain sayings" to share origins and meanings. Targeted will be high school and college students. April 17.
  - "Ginsenging in the Mountains" will feature this lucrative Appalachian hobby. As Rash explores in *Into the Gorge*, ownership of the mountains has different meaning and value for the differing mountain people. The program will engage senior citizens who relate to stories of "senging" still popular today. April 23.
  - "Critters at Risk" inspired by *The Woman Who Believed in Jaguars* story, will raise awareness of endangered species and habitats in Appalachia. Our area is a unique place in which one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the world intersects with some of the most destructive land use practices in the world. April 30.
  - "Check Out Hunger at Your Library" food drive for local food banks and animal shelters will be held during National Library Week. Recognizing that it takes more than words to fix hunger, our libraries will serve as collection points for nonperishable food donations for our local food banks and animal shelters. Hunger and animal welfare are prominently figured in Rash's story *Hard Times*. April 7-13.
  - Throughout the NEA Big Read Month:
    - "Mountain Superstitions Displays" As Rash explored in *The Corpse Bird* story, mountain superstition is prevalent in the hearts of the Appalachian people. Our libraries will invite residents to bring in stories, pictures, and artwork based on mountain superstition.
    - "Civil War 150 Display" As the author depicts in *Dead Confederates and the Lincolmites*, strong, yet mixed, feelings prevailed in the Appalachian Mountains. This traveling exhibit will invite residents to understand how soldiers, freedmen, and families struggled to address the nature of democracy, citizenship, and the human toll of wartime.
    - "Drug Awareness & Elder Abuse Prevention Campaigns" Unfortunately, one of the plights of the Appalachians is the continuing abuse of illegal drugs resulting in unintended elder abuse as described in the *Back of Beyond* story. Partnerships with local law enforcement and senior citizen agencies will heighten awareness through these campaigns.
    - "Appalachian Craft Exhibits" To bring awareness to the beauty of Appalachian crafting, artworks will be exhibited in libraries and at partnering agencies.
  - "Book Discussions" 40 community book discussions will be held at public libraries, college classrooms, school libraries, senior centers, adult education sites, and prisons.
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## Partnerships Description

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(a) Describe your partnerships with libraries (as applicable) and community organizations. (b) Explain the role each partner will play in your program, the activities each partner will undertake with your organization, and whether these partnerships are confirmed or pending. (c) Explain how your partnerships will allow you to reach your intended audience(s) and strengthen or build new communities around the NEA Big Read activities.

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- Partnerships will play a key role in our successful programming implementation. Since Lonesome Pine serves four counties and one city, we are in the position of providing outreach to a number of confirmed secondary schools: Wise, Dickenson, Lee & Scott County and City of Norton. Plans include placing books in each library and with English departments. Teachers will conduct at least one book discussion in each county school system to engage with student audiences.
  - Partnerships are confirmed with the University of Virginia's College at Wise and Mountain Empire Community College. A key venture will be forged with The Center for Appalachian Studies at UVa-Wise which strives to connect students and faculty to the region in which they work and live. The study of Burning Bright is a perfect fit as the Center will feature the writings of Ron Rash in the curriculum and writing assignments of the Appalachian Writers Project. Copies of Burning Bright will be distributed in the Wyllie Library. MECC Foundation's Cultural & Humanities Committee hosts a yearly writing celebration, awarding prizes to both student and adult writers in the categories of short story and poetry. Featured author, Ron Rash, will deliver our keynote address at the kickoff during this literary celebration. Each participant will be given a copy of Burning Bright during the writing awards ceremony. Faculty will participate in the panel discussion of Burning Bright quotes/themes and in several other programs described in the narrative.
  - Regional Adult Education has confirmed an eagerness to participate. Books will be distributed to adult learners who are seeking GED diplomas. Book discussions in adult education classrooms will engage learners who will be invited to participate in all activities.
  - To engage prison populations, LPRL will partner with Wallen's Ridge State Prison, Red Onion State Prison, and the Lee County Penitentiary. These agencies have partnered before and are confirmed. The library will place books in prison libraries and with education providers.
  - Mountain Empire Older Citizens which serves the elderly population in our service area is a confirmed partnership. The library will seek to re-engage seniors in the reading by conducting reading discussions and programs for older citizens. MEOC will conduct our proposed program featuring resources for older citizens and a campaign to prevent elder abuse.
  - PAWS of Southwest Virginia, an animal rescue organization, will partner to engage citizens in the care and foster of animals. PAWS will sponsor a donation program so community members can provide direct support to an animal in need and to stock local animal shelters across the region with cleaning supplies and food.
  - Food Bank of Wise County will partner by sponsoring a food drive for eligible families.
  - Commonwealth Attorney Offices and local law enforcements in Wise, Dickenson, Lee, and Scott Counties propose to conduct the anti-drug campaign across the region during NEA Big Read.
  - LPRL proposes to partner with The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, whose mission is to promote the knowledge and understanding of American history through educational programs and resources. The library will seek to host the Traveling Exhibit, Civil War 150 as outlined in our activities narrative. School visits will engage the student populations, while daily attendance will engage residents of all ages.
  - The Clinch Ranger District of the US Forest Service will partner as a presenter and provider of resource for the Ginsenging program.
  - Newspaper Outlets will provide invaluable promotional support. The Coalfield Progress, The Post, Dickenson Star, Powell Valley News & Scott County Virginia Star will provide advertising and media coverage of events at no cost.
  - Friends of the Library organizations in each of the Counties will provide volunteer assistance and financial support of programming events.
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## Promotional Description

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(a) Describe how you will promote your programming. Discuss any proposed or existing partnerships with specific media outlets. (b) Explain how your program will utilize the PDF digital resources found on arts.gov and distribute copies of your reading selection.

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LPRL will launch a multilayered promotional campaign for the NEA Big Read that will utilize print, digital, and word of mouth resources. Press releases and photos of activities and engaged readers will be sent to all of our local and regional newspapers, radio and television stations. Prior awards have been highlighted as a prestigious honor for our rural area and these media outlets will continue to enthusiastically promote the NEA Big Read. Posters, book displays, flyers, and bookmarks will be found in-house and at prominent locations throughout our service area. We will make copies of our book selection and discussion resources available at branch libraries and will distribute them to program attendees, book clubs, school teachers, and other community partners.

We will prominently feature the NEA Big Read on the landing page of LPRL's website, which will include a link to the NEA's Big Read webpage. From the LPRL homepage and many partnership websites and social media outreach sites, we will link to the multimedia podcast, PDF discussion information, and any video presentations that may be forthcoming. LPRL will produce a special library newsletter edition that will highlight a schedule of all NEA Big Read activities across the region with information on how to get the book and join us. These newsletters will be available in print form and will be emailed to key community officials, schools, and groups; links to the NEA digital resources will be included in the newsletter for easy access. Each library branch will post a schedule of events on its Facebook page and these posts will be shared on partner and community Facebook/News group pages. We will keep momentum by continuously posting updates and photos/videos of activities, and encourage our followers to share on their own accounts. LPRL is currently in the process of expanding our social media presence to include other platforms such as YouTube and Twitter as we utilize inventive methods for program promotion.

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NEA Big Read: proposal budget

Expense	Detailed description	Source(s)	Match/Cost-share				Totals	
			NEA Big Read Grant	Applicant	Partner/Funder	In-kind	Match total	Sub total
<b>Personnel</b>	<i>Detail the cost of staff for your Big Read project. This can include fringe benefits.</i>							
LPRL Director	salary 100 hours @\$35/hr	Applicant		\$3,500			\$3,500	\$3,500
LPRL Assistant Director	salary 120 hours @ \$30/hr	Applicant		\$3,600			\$3,600	\$3,600
LPRL Branch Managers	salary 40 hours @ \$18/hr for 6 managers	Applicant		\$4,320			\$4,320	\$4,320
LPRL Administrative Assistant	salary 80 hours @ \$11/Hr	Applicant		\$880			\$880	\$880
LPRL Business Manager	salary 30 hours @ \$25/hr	Applicant		\$750			\$750	\$750
LPRL Fringe Benefits	benfits of LPRL employees at 12%	Applicant		\$1,560			\$1,560	\$1,560
							\$0	\$0
							\$0	\$0
							\$0	\$0
							\$0	\$0
							\$0	\$0
							\$0	\$0
<b>Program expenses</b>	<i>Detail costs associated with your Big Read.</i>							
Speaker Fees	Keynote speaker - Ron Rash (includes travel)	MECC Cultural Comm. Foundation	\$5,000		\$5,000		\$5,000	\$10,000
Facility Space	Goodloe Center for Kickoff Event, 1 time x \$500	Mtn. Empire Comm. College				\$500	\$500	\$500
Storyteller	Donald Davis (includes travel)	Grant	\$2,500				\$0	\$2,500
Facility Space	Hotel Norton, Storyteller Event 1 time X \$500	City of Norton				\$500	\$500	\$500
Facility Space	Student Center for Panel Discussion	UVA's College at Wise				\$300	\$300	\$300
Traveling Exhibit	Civil War 150 Exhibit from Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History	Applicant		\$450			\$450	\$450
Books	1000 copies of "Burning Bright" NEA Big Read Title, \$6.50 ea from BookPal Wholesale	Applicant	\$6,330	\$170			\$170	\$6,500
Program Supplies	The Supply Room for Display Materials at 8 locations	Applicant		\$800			\$800	\$800
Administrative overhead	Phone, internet, electricity at 9 LPRL branches	Applicant		\$1,800			\$1,800	\$1,800
Speaker Fees	3 speakers, \$200 each for panel discussion members	Mtn. Empire Comm. College				\$600	\$600	\$600
Speaker Fees	3 speakers, \$200 each for panel discussion members	UVA's College at Wise				\$600	\$600	\$600
Speaker Fees	1 speaker, Critters at Risk Program	UVA's College at Wise				\$300	\$300	\$300
Program Supplies	The Supply Room for Check Out Hunger & Drug/Elder Campaign paper supplies	Applicant		\$500			\$500	\$500
Speaker Fees	1 speaker, Elder Abuse Program	Mountain Empire Older Citizens				\$300	\$300	\$300
Speaker Fees	1 speaker, Remembering Gary Stewart Event	Friends of the Library			\$300		\$300	\$300
Speaker Fees	2 speakers, Ginsenging In The Mountains Program	Clinch Ranger District				\$600	\$600	\$600
eBooks	20 eBook copies of "Burning Bright", NEA Big Read Title, \$12.99 ea from Overdrive	Applicant		\$260			\$260	\$260
							\$0	\$0
							\$0	\$0
<b>Promotion</b>	<i>Detail costs associated with advertising and promoting your Big Read.</i>							
Kickoff Promotion	Kickoff Flyers, Printed Literary Programs	Community College Foundation			\$1,500		\$1,500	\$1,500
Program Promotion	Newspaper & Radio Advertisting	Various News Media Partners				\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Outreach Promotion	Flyers for Hunger Food Drive	Wise County Food Bank			\$100		\$100	\$100
Outreach Promotion	Flyers for Pet Food/Supply Drive	PAWS of Southwest Virginia			\$100		\$100	\$100
Outreach Promotion	Flyers & Buttons for Drug Awareness Campaign	Commonwealth Attorney Offices			\$200		\$200	\$200
Outreach Promotion	Flyers & Buttons for Elder Abuse Campaign	MEOC Older Citizens			\$200		\$200	\$200
Program Promotion	Newsletter Copies	Applicant		\$800			\$800	\$800
Event Promotion	Activity/Event Posters & Bookmarks	Applicant		\$800			\$800	\$800
Advertising	Web Advertisting on Facebook and other social media ads	Applicant		\$500			\$500	\$500
Marketing Design	Graphic Design of Marketing & PR Materials	Applicant		\$1,500			\$1,500	\$1,500
							\$0	\$0
							\$0	\$0
							\$0	\$0
							\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$13,830</b>	<b>\$22,190</b>	<b>\$7,400</b>	<b>\$4,700</b>	<b>\$34,290</b>	<b>\$48,120</b>

If you'd like to offer further clarification on any expenses, please provide details below:

THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA'S COLLEGE AT WISE



Department of Language & Literature

1 College Avenue  
Wise, VA 24293

PHONE (276) 376-4586  
FAX (276) 328-0173

January 22, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of The Lonesome Pine Library's application for the NEA Big Read grant to bring celebrated author Ron Rash and other Appalachian authors to the region in the spring of 2019. The Library's vision to bring the college and the community together in a partnership of promoting the NEA Big Read is a more than welcome initiative.

As the NEA Big Read event offers an expanded opportunity for students and interested members of the community to hear from and get to know a major author from the region who has achieved worldwide acclaim, this partnership is very much in the spirit of the College's and the department's academic mission.

As chief faculty advisor to the *Jimson Weed*, the College's creative writing and arts journal, I have sponsored visits to campus by nationally recognized writers since 2000; I understand fully the value of exposing students—both in and out of the college—to professional writers. As an instructor of English, I have also come to realize how reading and writing are interrelated and will welcome any opportunity to bring the college and community together for a very fruitful event.

Further, in an area with ongoing literacy problems, the value of this grant is inestimable. We look forward to working with the staff at The Lonesome Pine Library and with acclaimed author Ron Rash to promote the NEA Big Read on campus and in the community.

On behalf of the *Jimson Weed* and the Department of Language and Literature of the University of Virginia's College at Wise, I enthusiastically support the Library's application for this grant.

Sincerely,

Gillian Huang-Tiller  
Professor of English  
Department of Language and Literature  
University of Virginia's College at Wise  
gch7u@uvasie.edu



**Mountain Empire**  
*Community College Foundation*

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[www.mecc.edu/foundation](http://www.mecc.edu/foundation)

January 10, 2018

Ms. Julie E. Short  
Assistant Director  
Lonesome Pine Regional Library  
124 Library Rd, SW  
Wise, VA 24293

Dear Julie,

It is my pleasure to write in support of the Big Read grant project being submitted by the Lonesome Pine Regional Library. The MECC Foundation has enjoyed many years of successful partnership with the Regional Library with past Big Read grants and the MECC Foundation is very pleased to learn that another application is being submitted this year.

Mountain Empire Community College Foundation Cultural & Humanities Committee hosts an annual literary festival, the John Fox Jr. Festival, which features an author reading and book signing and the announcement of winners of two writing competitions in short story and poetry categories for both student and adult writers. We typically have 125-150 participants attend the festival and approximately 200-300 entries to the writing contests. The author presentations and writing contest have been conducted for over 30 years. The event is a tradition in our community where John Fox, Jr. wrote his famous book, *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*.

Our past collaboration with the Lonesome Pine Regional Library has enabled each writing contest winner to receive a copy of the Big Read selected titled book. The library also mans a table at the celebration to distribute Big Read literature at the event. The director of Lonesome Pine Regional Library serves on the Foundation's Committee in a partnership dating back to 2007. This partnership is a natural fit for a celebration of the arts and reading.

The 2018 festival is scheduled for March 21 and we are beginning the process of planning the festival for 2019. The proposed collaboration would add to the interest of these festivals, and would provide an excellent forum for promoting books featured through the Big Read.

I join you in hoping that your application receives a favorable review and that the Lonesome Pine Regional Library and the MECC Foundation will be collaborating on Big Read goals again in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Greear".

Amy Greear, Interim Executive Director  
Mountain Empire Community College Foundation

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