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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **VAGABOND TOUR RETURNS TO FAYETTE 100 YEARS LATER**

**Uniontown, PA** – Exactly 100 years to the day that the original “Four Vagabonds” traveled through Fayette County, a group of car and history enthusiasts will recreate their journey.

From 1915 to 1924, the vagabonds - Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Harvey Firestone and John Burroughs - embarked on a series of summer camping trips, each time exploring a different part of the United States.

The well-organized trips comprised heavy passenger cars and vans to carry the travelers, equipment and household staff and Ford Motor Company photographers.

Founded by Ford in 1903, the Ford Motor Company was responsible for developing the assembly line process and subsequently creating the first mass-produced vehicle, the Ford Model T.

This weekend, the Mason Dixon Model T Club, a chapter of Ford Club International, will host a commemorative vagabond tour beginning in Fayette County and led by chapter organizer Bill Ramsey of Bruceton Mills, W. Va.

The club will be represented by about 60 people in 27 Ford Model Ts and drive the northern portion of the progressive tour, beginning with an overnight stay Saturday at the Historic Summit Inn Resort.

The Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Fayette Chamber of Commerce and National Road Heritage Corridor are working with Ramsey to create a one-of-a-kind experience for club members.

Stacey Magda, visitors bureau director of tourism development, said their journey will honor the stories and history of the vagabond tour.

“The original vagabonds did this kind of epic road trip in Ford Model Ts, which is what this group has set out to replicate,” Magda said. “It’s amazing that they’re staying at The Summit exactly 100 years to the date that those gentlemen stayed there”



The tour also coincides with the 200th anniversary of the National Road, for which various bicentennial events are being held through the end of the year.

The club will do some independent touring Sunday before being the guests of honor at a kickoff event that evening.

On Monday, the group will travel the National Road in a ride-along tour of such historic Fayette County sites as Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, Ohio State Park, Nemaquin Woodlands Resort, Fort Necessity National Battlefield and Laurel Caverns.

A stop at Frank Lloyd Wright's Kentuck Knob will also come with a special display of Lord Peter Palumbo's impressive antique car collection.

Magda said the tour is an important way to honor the vagabonds' legacy, as well as Fayette County, the National Road and the entire Laurel Highlands region.

"For us to have this type of rich travel history all around us is phenomenal," Magda said. "We're just so excited to have the opportunity to work with them and help highlight all the locations throughout the region that may or may not have been there in 1918, but are important for all visitors to see."

Following their tour of Fayette County, the group will move on to Somerset County before heading south into Deep Creek, Md. At the end of their tour next week, the group will return to The Summit for their final night in The Laurel Highlands.

"The Laurel Highlands is an incredible destination for any sort of niche group to visit, especially motor clubs," Magda said. "Those individuals are always so passionate about their hobbies and touring, and their vehicles are always a conversation starter for the public."

It was critical for multiple county and regional organizations to work together on the tour to show the visitors what can be achieved through such strong local partnerships, Magda added.

"Fayette County really stepped up to the plate on this," she said. "The county commissioners offered a sponsorship to help offset a lot of the group's costs and ensure they're able to see as many sites as possible during their stay."

"It's amazing for our visitors to see how the community comes together to honor our region because it's these types of efforts that keep people coming back."

Magda said it's important to continue supporting experiences like the vagabond tour to "continue the history of travel" in our area.

"It's good to let your mind wander not only into the future, but into the history of a place, and the legacy the original vagabonds left was incredible," Magda said. "It's an honor to be able to showcase the



many notable people who traveled our region over an extensive timeline and fell in love with Fayette County and the Laurel Highlands as people still do today.

“If you don’t know who has come before you, you don’t know much at all.”

For more information on the various entities involved, visit [www.laurelhighlands.org](http://www.laurelhighlands.org), [www.fayettechamber.org](http://www.fayettechamber.org), [www.nationalroadpa.org](http://www.nationalroadpa.org) and [www.modelT.org](http://www.modelT.org).

To learn more about Fayette County, visit [www.fayettecountypa.info](http://www.fayettecountypa.info).

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