

High-resolution downloadable photos of Garrison Keillor; and the United States Marine Band are available on Wolf Trap's Web site: http://www.wolftrap.org/Media_and_Newsroom/Photos_for_Publication.aspx

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wolf Trap Opens 2008 with more than \$3.4 Million in Improvements to Facilities

***Record Attendance Expected for Opening Weekend –
Two Nights of A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor and
Free, Summer Blast Off! with United States Marine Band and Live Fireworks***

Vienna, VA—Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts' opening weekend at the Filene Center features two of the most well attended performances offered during the summer months in the D.C. area. Patrons attending these performances, or any throughout the summer, will benefit from Wolf Trap's newly improved Main Gate facilities – including a new plaza, restrooms, gift shop, box office, and concession stands. Construction, which the National Park Service began in fall, 2007, will be officially completed with a **ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, May 23 at 6:15**. The original facility was first utilized during Wolf Trap's inaugural 1971 performance season and saw more than 14 million performing arts patrons pass through its gates.

With a much anticipated return to Wolf Trap's natural outdoor amphitheater, the internationally celebrated broadcast radio program ***A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor*** presents back-to-back performances on Friday, May 23, and Saturday, May 24 (**Saturday's performance features a live radio broadcast**). Sunday, May 25, Wolf Trap celebrates the opening of its summer season with the **2008 Summer Blast Off!**, featuring a free performance by **"The President's Own" United States Marine Band** followed by a live fireworks display. Although the event is free and no tickets are required, the park will close at capacity.

A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor

Appearing at Wolf Trap with an all-star cast fronted by 30-year-tenured radio personality Garrison Keillor, *A Prairie Home Companion* has grown into an international phenomenon with broadcasts from Canada, Ireland, Scotland, England, Germany, Iceland, and almost every one of the 50 states. In today's radio market, *A Prairie Home Companion* is heard by more than 4 million listeners each week on some 580 public radio stations (list at www.prairiehome.org), and abroad on America One and the Armed Forces Networks in Europe and the Far East. Appearing alongside Keillor in both Wolf Trap performances is broadcast personality Tim Russell, voted "Best Host" by *Mpls/St. Paul Magazine*, actors Sue Scott and Fred Newman, The Guy's All-Star Shoe Band, **musical guest Rhonda Vincent and the Rage**, and other special guests. Tickets for each performance range from \$48 in-house to \$20 on the lawn.

An hour prior to both performances, attendees will have the opportunity to experience a Pre-Performance Preview on the Old Farmhouse Lawn for a lecture and demonstration that offers insight and interpretation of the evening's attraction. More information can be found on Wolf Trap's Pre-Performance Preview Series by accessing this link -

<http://www.nps.gov/wotr/planyourvisit/ppp.htm>

2008 Summer Blast Off!

Presented as the symbolic launch of the 2008 season at Wolf Trap, the **Summer Blast Off!** begins at 8 p.m. with an evening of complimentary entertainment by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, followed by a fireworks display that rivals those seen in major cities on the 4th of July. For two centuries, the United States Marine Band has been part of similar events which have played a role in shaping our national heritage. Its omnipresent role in events of national importance has made it part of the fabric of American life and Wolf Trap welcomes its members as return performers.

The newly renovated Filene Center gates open at 7 p.m. for this event and patrons are free to select their choice of seats either in-house or on the lawn, but should keep in mind that the park closes once capacity is reached. The fireworks viewing area in the meadow opens following the performance at approximately 9:30 p.m., with the display scheduled for 9:45 p.m.

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For more information, call Wolf Trap at (703) 255-1868 or visit www.wolftrap.org.

Wolf Trap is metro accessible! Our environmentally friendly shuttle travels from the West Falls Church metro stop every 20 minutes two hours prior to show time. For more information, please visit www.wolftrap.org/metro.