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'Plainsong' Author Kent Haruf To Speak at Cal Poly Oct. 15

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- As part of Preface: The Cal Poly Shared Reading Program, award-winning author Kent Haruf will be at Cal Poly Oct. 15 to talk about his background and the writing of the national bestseller "Plainsong."

The event will be at 7 p.m. in Chumash Auditorium in the University Union. It is free and open to the public.

Launched in 2002, the Preface program aims to enrich the academic life of the university across all disciplines and provide students with a common intellectual experience, according to program coordinator Patricia Ponce.

This year more than 100 university staff and faculty members, along with incoming freshmen in the colleges of Agriculture and Liberal Arts, and participants in Cal Poly's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, read "Plainsong" over the summer and then met in small groups to discuss the book.

"We're very pleased that so many individuals have embraced Preface because one of our primary goals is to develop a sense of community," Ponce said. "Interestingly, the idea of community is one of 'Plainsong's' strong themes."

The book tells the story of a small ranching town and the converging lives of its residents. "Plainsong" won The New York Times Book Award and was a finalist for the National Book Award. It was a national bestseller when it came out in 1999 and was selected as a Notable Book of the Year by both The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times.

Haruf's two earlier novels are "The Tie That Binds," which received the Whiting Foundation Writer's Award, and "Where You Once Belonged," which received the Maria Thomas Award for Fiction. His short fiction has also appeared in The Best American Short Stories.

"An Evening of 'Plainsong' and Plain Talk by Kent Haruf" is sponsored by the university's Preface program, Academic Programs, Continuing Education, the colleges of Agriculture, Liberal Arts, and Science and Mathematics, the Student Affairs division, El Corral

Bookstore, the Honors Program, the Kennedy Library, the Office of the Provost, students of the

English Department, the Summer Advising Program, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the University

Center for Teacher Education, and the Week of Welcome program.

For more information, call Ponce at 756-1380 or go online to www.preface.calpoly.edu.

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