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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Brown County, Indiana Historic Little Nashville Opry Devastated By Late Night Fire

The historic "Little Nashville Opry" located in Brown County, Indiana was devastated by a fire late Saturday night, September 19th. The fire began after the conclusion of their traditional Saturday night show and quickly enveloped the entire complex. Fortunately the crowd had already left the premises and no one was inside the building.

Jane Ellis, Director of the Brown County CVB stated: "We are devastated that the historic *Little Nashville Opry* is closed due to a recent fire. Brown County has experienced major fires in the past and we are hopeful that the Opry will rebuild and continue their long-standing tradition of bringing national entertainment to the area."

There has been a history of fires in Brown County dating back to the early 1930's when the barber shop and surrounding buildings burned. *The Nashville House*, a major restaurant and tourist destination caught fire in September of 1943, Black's Lumber Yard in 1953, Miller's Drug Store in 1968 and the Art Gallery in the early 70's. Businessman *Andy Rogers*, who recently reopened The Seasons Lodge after a fire destroyed 60 rooms on January 2, 2007, simply stated: "No matter what, we are still going to be here." "When something like that happens it takes a while to get over the trauma of it," Fran Roger said.

The Opry provided the area with weekend entertainment offering national country entertainment such as Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, Pam Tillis and crowd favorite George Jones. They recently began including bluegrass shows featuring Rhonda Vincent and Marty Stuart. The Opry management on Monday released this statement: "All Friday night shows have been cancelled. The Saturday night show for September 26th featuring Andy Griggs has also been cancelled. We are contacting and working with the artists and their representatives to see if they are willing to perform at a different location in Brown County, keeping the Opry spirit alive." They also went on to say that "all ticket holders should hold on to their tickets until a final decision has been made on a per show basis."

The Brown County CVB is working closely with the lodging properties that are within walking distance of the Opry whose business will be greatly affected by the fire. Both properties stated that 80% of their weekend business was driven by the Opry shows. They will also extend their services to the Opry management to assist in securing alternative locations for shows that were scheduled in addition to handling visitor's questions and comments.

The Opry was a major entertainment venue for Brown County, attracting an average of 2,000 patrons for a Saturday night show from March to November. "This will have a definite effect on the economy, but with other attractions and outdoor recreation opportunities Brown County will still remain as one of the top destinations in Indiana" stated Debbie Dunbar, Director of Marketing and Communications.

The Brown County CVB administrative office is currently handling media requests and compiling a list of venues and donation offers that have been pouring in to help *The Little Nashville Opry*. The CVB's main goal is to retain the loyal Opry customers, release accurate information about the Opry and Brown County. As a result of the fire, the Opry's phone system is currently inoperable. In order to assist the management in gathering info about tickets purchased for their upcoming shows, the CVB has established a form on their website to capture information from the Opry customers. Please direct all visitors' requests to the CVB's website link at <http://www.browncounty.com/opry>. All media requests should be directed to *Jane Ellis*, Director or *Debbie Dunbar*, Director of Marketing and Communications.

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