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America's oldest man tells life story on Montana PBS

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NEWS RELEASE

Jan. 28, 2009

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AMERICA'S OLDEST MAN TELLS LIFE STORY ON MONTANA PBS

MISSOULA –

The first president Walter Breuning voted for was Woodrow Wilson.

Sixteen administrations later, the Great Falls resident will share 112 years of stories and memories during “A Conversation with Walter,” at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5, on Montana PBS.

Breuning’s years make him a supercentenarian – a person who has surpassed the age of 110. He is the oldest man in the United States and one of the 20 oldest people in the world.

On the show, he begins telling of his life in Montana’s homesteading era as an employee of James J. Hill’s Great Northern Railway in 1910.

“You’d see families riding in boxcars surrounded by their cattle and horses, all of them headed for North Dakota and Montana,” Breuning said. “In some cases Hill himself would cover their expenses.”

Breuning stayed with the railroad for 50 years, marrying and setting up a home in Great Falls, where he and his wife became acquaintances of artist Charles M. Russell. Breuning never remarried after his wife died in 1957.

Throughout the program Walter addresses the many technological, economic and political changes he has seen. Talking about President Barack Obama’s agenda, Breuning doesn’t mince

words. "This new president has inherited a heck of a mess, and if he thinks he can please all the people, he better think again," he said.

Montana PBS is using the latest technology to film a profile of a man who learned to read by a kerosene lantern and remembers hearing the first words come over his radio. Hosted by William Marcus and produced by Gus Chambers and Kagan Yochim, "A Conversation with Walter" will air on local Montana PBS stations in high definition.

For more information go to <http://www.montanapbs.org/ConversationwithWalter/>, call Chambers at 406-243-4093 or e-mail gus.chambers@umontana.edu.

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