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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **The Great Passion Play looks ahead after a *Great* 2013 Season**

(EUREKA SPRINGS, AR)- The cast and crew of The Great Passion Play, “America’s #1 Attended Outdoor Drama,” can celebrate after an outstanding 2013 season. Over 50,000 people witnessed “America’s #1 Attended Outdoor Drama” in its 46<sup>th</sup> season that featured 80 Play performances from May 3 to October 26.

“Our numbers have been much stronger than in previous years,” Randall Christy noted. Christy, founder of The Gospel Station Network out of Ada, Oklahoma, spearheaded the fundraising effort that prevented the Play from entering foreclosure. “It has been a year of *good news* for us,” said Christy, who now serves as the President of the nonprofit foundation that runs the Play. “We raised \$75,000 in 10 days at the beginning of the year to save the Play. We welcomed our 7.7 millionth visitor. And, we even set our 5-year single night attendance record. Now, we look toward having an even better 2014 season!”

“Not only were we up 30% in average attendance per performance this year,” shared Kent Butler, the Director of Marketing and Public Relations at the Play, “but we were also up overall in attendance compared to the past 2 seasons. What makes it so amazing is that we did it with 30 less performances.” In an effort to curtail overhead and reduce expenses, the Play reduced its normal performance season of 110 performances to just 80 performances. “Taking away 30 performances was a major faith move, and at the

same time, it was also a major business move,” Butler said. “God wants us to be good stewards of the many blessings that we have been given. Because of the marketing strategies and the operational adjustments, we finished up 7.51% in overall attendance compared to last year. For the Play, that is the largest percent increase in overall attendance compared to the previous year since 1983!”

“Many volunteers stepped up to get us off the ground this season,” Keith Butler, Kent’s father and a longtime board member of the nonprofit foundation. “Mr. Christy and I cannot express how thankful we are to all those who have sacrificed to make this season a possibility.” Christy, Butler, and Tom Bush all served on a full-time volunteer basis on the Play’s board, just as all previous board members. “Truthfully, no one person can take the credit for the success of this season, only God is responsible.”

“We calculated that some \$300,000 of volunteer labor was contributed toward The Great Passion Play in 2013,” Dan Hester, the Director of Volunteers shared. Much of that volunteerism came from the months of January through the month of April when there was hardly anyone that was on the payroll. “People simply gave of their time, their hearts, and their hands early on. Not to discount any of the work that has happened after that,” Hester reiterated, “but it was truly like watching a miracle in the making.”

Featuring a cast of over 170 actors, the Play is performed amid a 550-ft historically accurate stage and brings to life the epic drama surrounding Christ’s last days on earth, including his death, resurrection and ascension from May through October. The Great Passion Play runs 1 hour and 45 minutes, featuring an original musical score composed by Phil Perkins and performed by the world-renowned National Philharmonic Orchestra of London. This year’s performance featured Arabian horses, donkeys, and dozens of birds

as well as 3 camels donated by the “Wild Wilderness Drive through Safari” in Gentry, Arkansas.

The Great Passion Play’s 2014 season schedule has already been released. Specially discounted tickets are available if tickets are purchased in full **before February 1, 2014**. \$15 Play tickets for adults (ages 17+), \$5 for youth and children (4-16), and kids under 4 are always free! That’s a saving of \$10 for adults and youth, and \$6 for children! For more information, visit [GreatPassionPlay.org](http://GreatPassionPlay.org) or call toll free 800-882-PLAY (7529).



**For high resolution pictures of the Play:**

<http://www.greatpassionplay.org/high-resolution-photos.html>

**For more information:**

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