



NEWS RELEASE

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MANAGER OF *YOUNG ABE*, *BIG RIVER* NAMED

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A man whose background has ranged from operating accounting and data-processing businesses in California through serving as producer and financial officer for *The Great Passion Play* in Arkansas has been named managing director of the Lincoln Amphitheatre outdoor musical productions of *Young Abe Lincoln* and *Big River*.

Charles B. Robertson has assumed his new duties, primarily working out of an office at the University of Southern Indiana, which oversees operation of the amphitheatre in cooperation with the State Department of Natural Resources. The Lincoln City offices will be opened Monday, May 11; Robertson will be working there after May 20.

The *Young Abe Lincoln* production will open Friday, June 12, directed by W.L. "Rusty" Mundell. Billy Edd Wheeler's musical rendition of Abraham Lincoln's life in Southern Indiana from age 7 to 21 will be joined this summer by William Hauptman's award-winning musical, *Big River*, which captures the spirit of Mark Twain's classic tale of Huckleberry Finn. *Big River* will open on Friday, July 3; it is being directed by Elliot Wasserman. Both are USI theatre faculty members; Mundel is leaving the program after this year and Wasserman will take over.

James R. Blevins, dean of the USI School of Liberal Arts, said Robertson was chosen to manage the productions because of "his experience in running this type of operation and running a very successful operation." He pointed out *The Great Passion Play*, a re-creation of the Easter story, opened in 1967 with attendance of 28,000 and drew 274,000 for last year's audiences. *Young Abe Lincoln* had a paid attendance of 18,916 last year, its fifth year of operation.

Robertson said outdoor drama "has proven to be a superb educational tool, a means of sharing powerful insights into life" with audiences. It also can be a stepping stone for young actors, he noted, pointing out that actor Andy Griffith started out at *Lost Colony* in North Carolina. Issuing a call for southern Indiana support, Robertson said, *Young Abe Lincoln* and *Big River* have assembled a talented pool of actors and technical directors and promise dual evenings of fun and family entertainment.

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Robertson was affiliated with *The Great Passion Play* in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, for 10 years, last serving as vice-president for finance, controller, production general manager, and special assignments person for the Elna M. Smith Foundation. He was producer of *The Great Passion Play* from 1983 to 1987.

Robertson has operated bookkeeping/tax and data-processing services in Bishop, California, and was staff accountant in the home office of Farmers Insurance Group. He started working at age 15 as a part-time pressman with CNC printing in Glendale, California, and was superintendent of the printing department when he left the firm in 1969.

Robertson is a graduate of Glendale Community College, Life Bible College in Los Angeles, and California State University at Los Angeles. In addition to his full-time positions, he has been a part-time college instructor, a church pastor, a director of youth summer camps, school district trustee, elected representative and board member with the California School Board Association, and active with civic and community organizations. He is an ordained minister and maintains membership in the Christian Management Association, the National Society of Tax Professionals, and the Elna M. Smith Foundation. Robertson is married and the father of three adult children.

The two Lincoln Amphitheatre musicals may be seen on alternate nights -- *Young Abe* on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays through August 22; *Big River* on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays through August 21. The plays will open at 8 p.m. daily, except Mondays, when the amphitheatre is closed. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$9 for senior citizens (60-plus), and \$6 for children (12-under); all seats are reserved and reservations are recommended.

The audience is invited to arrive early and enjoy a picnic supper served at 6 p.m. at an awning-covered pavilion. Tickets are \$6.50 for adults, \$4.50 for children (12-under); reservations are required.