

Next week's History Talks event at the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History promises to be one for the record books. "This isn't going to be your average program," said museum Executive [Director](#) Matt Edwards. "This one will be a little more special."

Saturday's program, which gets under way at 2 p.m. on September 13 in the third floor meeting space at the museum, will feature Jordan Nance, a documentary film-maker who will be [screening](#) his well-received film "Broadcast: A Man and His Dream."

The film should have special meaning for Surry County residents, Edwards said. "This is about the early days of WPAQ radio and its impact on the historic music of the region," he said. Edwards said Nance's documentary is even more impressive due to his physical challenges. "What's interesting about this program is not necessarily our typical History Talks speaker," he said. "He suffers from cerebral palsy, and the form he has makes him wheelchair-bound and he has to speak through a computerized voice mechanism much like Stephen Hawking."

In Nance's teenage years, Edwards said, he became fascinated with the music of the region, listening often to WPAQ. "He would [listen](#) from his home in Reidsville and developed a real affinity for old-time music," he said.

That devotion to the region's [musical](#) heritage planted the seeds for decades of work, according to Edwards. "He has spent the better part of the last 10-12 years documenting the early history of the station, and he became close friends with the late Ralph Epperson," Edwards said. "In fact, he was able to interview him about six weeks before (Epperson) passed away in 2005."

All told, Nance interviewed more than 60 [musicians](#) and former employees affiliated with the radio station, many of whom were on hand during the station's developmental years in the 1950s and 1960s, he added. "Kelly Epperson, who owns the station today, will tell you Jordan knows more about that radio station than anyone else alive, including himself," Edwards said.

In addition to the documentary screening, Edwards said additional programming will include

performances by some of the station's early musicians including Mac Snow and the Round Peak Ramblers.

"As an added bonus, the museum will be unveiling the original WPAQ call letters which hung on the outside of the station since 1948," Edwards said. "When they were taken down, we were very fortunate to be able to have them repaired, and we will be placing them in our permanent exhibit."

Edwards said he encourages the public to attend the free event. "From a historic standpoint, what Nance has done not only helps us to document a very important piece of our regional musical history, but he's also been able to find tremendous resources that no one knew were out there," he said. "He has images from people's private collections that no one knew existed." "It's just a treasure trove for us," Edwards said.