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**‘WILSON & DITCH: DIGGING AMERICA’  
NEW PBS CHILDREN’S WEB-ONLY SOCIAL STUDIES SERIES  
ON PBSKIDSGO.ORG THIS FALL**

***The Jim Henson Company Launches Original Animated Webisodes on  
American Culture, History and Geography***

PASADENA, Calif. (August 2, 2009) – Coming this fall exclusively to PBSKIDSGO.org, WILSON & DITCH: DIGGING AMERICA, produced by The Jim Henson Company, invites kids ages 6 to 10 on a cross country adventure with two comical gophers as they explore America’s most famous (and perhaps not-so-famous) destinations. While learning about American culture, history and geography, brothers Wilson and Ditch ride in style in their green-powered van, sharing experiences and real world resources for families as they visit some of the country’s top cities, national parks and attractions. Funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the project for PBSKIDSGO.org includes original online video and interactive games as well as blogs and podcasts posted by the brothers. PBSKIDS.org receives an average of 9 million unique visitors per month and the PBS KIDS GO! video player delivers an average of 1.3 million streams per week. The announcement was made today at the annual Television Critics Association summer press tour.

The new Web site continues The Jim Henson Company and PBS’s strong relationship in building curriculum-rich content including the PBS KIDS® preschool series SID THE SCIENCE KID and the upcoming DINOSAUR TRAIN. “We know kids will enjoy exploring the amazing places featured on the site and we hope they’ll get inspired to visit and discover these destinations with their own families,” said Halle Stanford, Executive Vice President of Children’s Entertainment for The Jim Henson Company. “The Internet – and specifically PBSKIDSGO.org - has become a destination for millions of kids to play and learn about the world. As they travel the country with Wilson and Ditch, our audience will gain a greater understanding of their national citizenship that extends beyond their own community.”

Animated webisodes will star Wilson and Ditch (performed by Brian Henson and Paul Rugg) and will be brought to life using the Emmy® Award-winning Henson Digital Puppetry Studio, a proprietary technology that allows performers to puppeteer and voice digitally animated characters in real time. In addition to the webisodes, travel blog and on-location audio podcasts, Wilson and Ditch's new site will also feature original comics from the brothers' adventures.

"Not every child has the opportunity to physically explore the United States," said Lesli Rotenberg, SVP, Children's Media, PBS. "Wilson and Ditch are funny guides who take early elementary school kids on an adventure to see parts of the country that they might have never known existed. PBS KIDS GO! is designed to cultivate a love of learning and expand possibilities for every child both in and out of the classroom. As the most trusted educational media brand, it's a priority to continue to offer this age group something that will not only make them laugh but enrich their everyday learning."

"We've seen tremendous growth on the Web this past year — so much so that PBS KIDS regularly finishes in the top three of all U.S. kids' sites and PBS.org last year surpassed all commercial television network sites in visits," added Jason Seiken, SVP, PBS Interactive. "Much of this growth has been driven by new features such as our video hub (PBS.org/video) and our kids' video hub (PBSKIDSGO.org/video). The next phase of our growth strategy involves aggressive plans for original Web content, including high-quality series such as WILSON & DITCH: DIGGING AMERICA."

PBS KIDS GO! is an educational multimedia destination specifically designed for early elementary school kids which debuted online at PBSKIDSGO.org and as an afternoon program block on PBS member stations in October 2004. PBS KIDS worked closely with early elementary school kids and industry experts to create this destination for an audience with limited choices for media content that is both fun and educational. With engaging, smart, age-appropriate content and a fun, quirky setting, PBS KIDS GO! empowers kids to discover themselves, define the diverse world around them, explore new relationships and embrace a love of learning. PBSKIDSGO.org hosts sites from all PBS KIDS GO! series such as ARTHUR, FETCH! WITH RUFF RUFFMAN and WORDGIRL, alongside unique destinations such as "EekoWorld" – an environment where kids create their own creatures and monitor them in the wild, and "It's My Life" – a forum for kids to delve into the daily issues of school, family and friends.

WILSON AND DITCH: DIGGING AMERICA was created by Joe Purdy (story editor of DINOSAUR TRAIN and SID THE SCIENCE KID) and Craig Bartlett (creator of DINOSAUR TRAIN and HEY ARNOLD!). The Web site will be written by Purdy and its animated segments will be directed by Bartlett. Bartlett will also create the site's original comic strip material.

### **About PBS KIDS and PBS KIDS GO!**

PBS KIDS, for preschoolers, and PBS KIDS GO!, for early elementary school kids, offer all children the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television, online and community-based programs. With positive role models and content designed to nurture a child's total well-being, PBS's children's media and family and educator resources - including PBS KIDS and PBS KIDS GO! television series, PBSKIDS.org, PBSKIDSGO.org, PBS Parents

(PBSPARENTS.org), PBS Teachers (PBSTEACHERS.org), PBS KIDS Raising Readers and literacy events across the country - leverage the full spectrum of media, technology and community to build knowledge, critical thinking, imagination and curiosity. Empowering children for success in school and in life, only PBS KIDS and PBS KIDS GO! have earned the unanimous endorsement of parents, children, industry leaders and teachers. In September 2008, PBS KIDS GO! launched its video player (PBSKIDSGO.org/video), featuring hundreds of video clips and dozens of full-length episodes. Since launch, the site is averaging 1.3 million streams per week. PBSKIDS.org averages 9 million unique visitors a month. PBS is a nonprofit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's 356 public television stations, serving more than 115 million people on-air and online each month. For more information on specific shows supporting literacy, science, math, and more, visit [PBS.org/pressroom](http://PBS.org/pressroom).

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The Jim Henson Company has remained an established leader in family entertainment for over 50 years and is recognized worldwide as an innovator in puppetry, animatronics and digital animation. Best known as creators of the world famous Muppets, Henson has received over 50 Emmy Awards and nine Grammy Awards. Recent credits include “Sid the Science Kid”, and “Pajanimals”. Features include “The Dark Crystal,” “Labyrinth,” “MirrorMask,” and “Unstable Fables.” Television productions include “Fraggle Rock” and the sci-fi cult series “Farscape.” With additional locations in New York and London, The Jim Henson Company is headquartered in Los Angeles on the historic Charlie Chaplin lot, complete with soundstage and postproduction facilities. Independently owned and operated by the five adult children of founder Jim Henson, the Company is also home to Jim Henson's Creature Shop™, a pre-eminent character-building and visual effects group with international film, television and advertising clients, as well as Henson Recording Studios, one of the music industry's top recording facilities known for its world-class blend of state of the art and vintage equipment. The Company is currently in production on 40 episodes of “Dinosaur Train,” an animated preschool series teaching concepts of natural science and history, set to debut on PBS KIDS in fall 2009. The Company's Henson Alternative brand continues to produce “Puppet Up! - Uncensored,” a live puppet improvisational show that runs monthly at the Avalon Hollywood. The Company has also announced the creation of Jim Henson Designs, a merchandise collection inspired by Jim Henson's earliest sketches, and The Jim Henson Company: Discoveries, an acquisitions banner that celebrates outstanding third party produced independent film, television and video productions from around the globe embodying the Company's enduring legacy. [www.henson.com](http://www.henson.com)



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