BROOKS BLEVINS

ABOUT THE SPEAKER
Brooks Blevins is the Noel Boyd Professor of Ozarks Studies at Missouri State University in Springfield. He is a native of the Ozarks, tracing his roots deep into the antebellum era in both Arkansas and Missouri. He has written nine books and edited three more. His most recent books are the History of the Ozarks trilogy, tracing the story of the region from prehistoric times to the present day.

AVAILABLE PRESENTATIONS

HOW TO TALK OZARK IN SEVEN SIMPLE STEPS
This lighthearted presentation explores early ethnic and cultural influences on the Ozarks through the lens of dialect and accent. It dismisses the old notion of Elizabethan dialect in the Ozarks and instead looks at words, phrases, and speech patterns that were once common in vernacular Ozark (and usually Appalachian) language, tracing their origins to European or colonial American roots. The presentation invites frequent audience participation and includes a built-in “Talking Ozark” quiz. Natives or longtime residents of the Ozarks will enjoy revisiting styles and words that have probably gone unused for decades, and others will gain an appreciation for cultural diffusion and regional distinctiveness in Missouri—as well as the forces that constantly chip away at that distinctiveness.

MAGIC WATERS AND SILVER DOLLARS: A HISTORY OF OZARKS TOURISM
Tourism has been essential to the economy of the Ozarks for longer than anyone can remember. If there is any place (other than St. Louis and Kansas City) in Missouri that rings a bell for practically all Americans, it is Branson, one of the nation’s premier tourist havens. But Branson is only one of many places in the Ozarks that have beckoned to travelers and tourists. Historian Brooks Blevins takes listeners on a tour through time and across the Ozarks, illustrating the origins of regional tourism and the ways the industry has changed. From the healing water craze of the late 1800s to float fishing outfitters, from mountain getaways for affluent urbanites to massive reservoirs created by the Army Corps of Engineers, Blevins connects the industry’s high points to societal changes and American trends in entertainment -- and introduces audience members to colorful characters and regional oddities along the way.

SPEAKER CONTACT INFORMATION
- Email: brblevins@missouristate.edu