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## **THE ROOTS OF MODERN CIVILIZATION, IN OUR BACKYARD**

*Telluride Historical Museum and Pinhead Institute offer lecture on Mesa Verde's Neolithic Revolution*

**Telluride, Colorado (January 16, 2012)** – Perhaps the world's best documented case of the Neolithic Revolution, which marked the shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture—possibly the most important transformation in human history—can be found in our own backyard: southwestern Colorado's Mesa Verde region.

On Thursday, the Telluride Historical Museum and Pinhead Institute will host a Telluride Unearthed lecture exploring the roots of modern civilization in the Mesa Verde Region.

During the vast majority of our time on earth, humans subsisted by hunting wild animals and collecting wild plants. About 10,000 years ago, people created the first domesticated foods. Agriculture developed independently in places like Papua New Guinea, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Americas, and specifically at Mesa Verde, where maize farming was introduced.

Dr. Mark Varien, Chair of Research and Education at the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center in Cortez, Colorado, will host the lecture. His work in the Mesa Verde region dates back to 1979. "The Pueblo Indians are some of the world's most innovative and resilient societies," said Varien.

The Crow Canyon Archaeological Center has conducted research into the deep history of Pueblo peoples since its founding in 1983. The origins of Pueblo society in the Mesa Verde region is the focus of the Center's newest research initiative: The Basketmaker Communities Project, a multi-year excavation project focused on a dense concentration of sites dating to the Basketmaker III period (A.D. 600 – 725).

"We'll be discussing the era when the first public architecture—great kivas—were invented. These buildings were used for community activities rather than domestic activities," said Varien.

The Center's plans include excavations at the Dillard Site, the location of the only known great kiva in the Mesa Verde region.

Varien will speak about the project, share what deep Pueblo Indian history is being uncovered and discuss what the new research tells us about the Neolithic Revolution.

Telluride Unearthed is a collaborative lecture series intended to illuminate history through the lens of science. 2012 marks the seven years of collaboration between the museum and the Pinhead Institute.

The lecture begins at 6p.m., at the museum. Admission is \$5. For more information visit [telluridemuseum.org](http://telluridemuseum.org).