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**CONTACT:** Jeff Mammenga, Media Coordinator, (605) 773-6000,  
Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us

## **Balloon Book Signing Happening Sept. 23 at Cultural Heritage Center**

PIERRE, S.D. -- Arley Fadness will sign copies of his recently published book "Balloons Aloft: Flying South Dakota Skies" from 2-4 p.m. and from 6-7:30 p.m. CDT on Monday, Sept. 23, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

"South Dakota has been a major player in ballooning worldwide. Arley Fadness has witnessed many of the great moments in ballooning that made history in South Dakota," said Michael Lewis, president of the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation.

The foundation is coordinating the book signing and is the nonprofit fundraising partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society.

Fadness, 76, is a retired Lutheran clergyman who lives in Custer. He was trained as a draftsman at the Boeing Airplane Company in Seattle while he went to college. He applied for a job and was hired as a draftsman by Ed Yost. Yost invented the modern hot air balloon and is considered the Father of the Modern Hot Air Balloon.

"I had 30 years knowing Ed Yost as balloon master and colleague," Fadness said. "The reason I wrote the book was there were so many experiences I knew about with ballooning. It is important to have history written down."

Fadness served as chaplain at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Explorer II that had been launched from the Stratobowl near Rapid City in 1935. He was present when granite markers were placed at the north rim of the Stratobowl to commemorate several historic balloon flights launched there.

In "Balloons Aloft: Flying South Dakota Skies," Fadness chronicles the risks, dangers and adventures of aeronauts who flew primarily in South Dakota skies.

"These are true stories that happened in the state that few know about," Fadness said.

Some readers have been surprised to learn how many significant scientific hot air balloon flights originated in South Dakota, he said. Some do not know the story of Lt. Harlow Neibling of Huron, who shot down a German Fokker with his Colt .45-caliber revolver as he parachuted from his burning, falling observation balloon in World War I.

Many readers are unaware that the Japanese attached bombs to weather balloons and released them into the jet-stream to cross the Pacific Ocean during World War II. Eight of these bombs landed in South Dakota. A balloon bomb that landed south of Ree Heights is displayed in the Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society at the Cultural Heritage Center.

The publication of "Balloons Aloft" commemorates the 150th anniversary of the publication of Jules Verne's "Five Weeks in a Balloon." "Balloons Aloft" is the eighth book Fadness has written. The others focus on religion.

Fadness will have copies of his book available for sale at the book signing. He will visit with people on an individual basis about the history of ballooning in South Dakota during the book signing.

For more information, call (605) 773-6006.

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*The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit [history.sd.gov](http://history.sd.gov) for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.*