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Film about Oz author Baum to be shown, discussed at Cultural Heritage Center

PIERRE, S.D. -- *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* author L. Frank Baum will be remembered on the day of his birth with a special program at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The 45-minute documentary "The Origins of Oz" will be shown at 7 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, May 15. To "celebrate" Baum's birthday, cake and lemonade will be served.

The documentary was produced for the Smithsonian Institution and was shown on the Smithsonian Channel. Enthusiastically embraced by young and old alike, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was the *Harry Potter* of its day. "The Origins of Oz" visits the locations that inspired Baum, digs into his family's archival collection, and features interviews with fans and historians as it tells the heart-warming story of the man behind the classic. Baum was born on May 15, 1856, in Chittenango, N.Y., and died on May 6, 1919, in Hollywood, Calif.

Nancy Tystad Koupal of Pierre, director of Research and Publishing for the South Dakota State Historical Society, is one of the Baum historians featured in the documentary. She will present the film and answer questions about Baum and the documentary.

"We are pleased to remember Baum on his birthday, as he has a direct connection to South Dakota," said Jay D. Vogt, director of the South Dakota State Historical Society. "Baum and his family moved to Aberdeen in 1888, where he opened a department store and later was editor of the newspaper *Saturday Pioneer*. Both failed, and the Baums moved to Chicago in 1891."

The event is free and everyone is welcome to attend.

For more information, call 773-3458.

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The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation is a private charitable nonprofit that seeks funding to assist the South Dakota State Historical Society in programming and projects to preserve South Dakota's history and heritage for future generations.

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 www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.