

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Nov. 22, 2013

CONTACT: Jeff Mammenga, (605) 773-6000 or Mike Mueller, (605) 773-3688

Cultural Heritage Center has new parking lot for holiday open house visitors

PIERRE, S.D. -- The Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre has a new visitor parking lot, just in time for this Friday's annual holiday open house of the South Dakota State Historical Society.

Parking has often been a problem at the center since it opened in 1989, and that problem is multiplied during high-traffic times such as the holiday open house, when 600-plus visitors come each year the day after Thanksgiving.

Construction on the project began in late August and was finalized on Nov. 22. The work was done in two phases, starting south of the old entrance and finishing north of it, to maintain continuing public access to the building.

"We are pleased that our new visitor parking lot is finished in time for our holiday open house," said Jay D. Vogt, director of the State Historical Society. "It should greatly improve the flow of traffic not only that day, but in the future."

The previous parking lot allowed only for one-way traffic and was especially difficult for buses and motor homes to maneuver.

"The new parking lot is an improved design for visitors," said Paul Kinsman, commissioner of the state Bureau of Administration. "It now has two two-way access points to improve traffic flow and it will also be easier for tour buses to come and go."

Two-way traffic through the new lot also improves safety by allowing buses to drop off visitors on the building side of the vehicle rather than having them walk around the bus.

The Cultural Heritage Center is part of the state capitol complex managed by BOA. The State Historical Society is a state agency, a division of the Department of Tourism.

Friday's holiday open house runs from 12-4:30 p.m. CST. The event features free admission to the museum, photos with Santa Claus, holiday entertainment and treats, living-history demonstrations and special buys in the Heritage Store. Visitors are encouraged to bring items to donate to the local food pantry.

-30-

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.