

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, Jan. 11, 2013

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Museum of South Dakota State Historical Society announces new status as Smithsonian Institution Affiliate

PIERRE, S.D. -- The Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society, located at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre, announces its new affiliation with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

“This exciting new endeavor brings the Smithsonian, in all of its breadth and scope, to our prairie home and offers opportunities for the public to explore perspectives on history and culture,” said Jay D. Vogt, director of the State Historical Society. “The South Dakota State Historical Society and Smithsonian Institution share many common goals of disseminating knowledge and a strong commitment to serving our communities.”

Harold A. Closter, director of Smithsonian Affiliations, announced the new partnership last night at a gathering of legislators, elected officials, members, donors and Gov. Dennis Daugaard at the Cultural Heritage Center during the annual Legislative Reception. In an Executive Proclamation given at a brief ceremony Thursday evening, Gov. Daugaard proclaimed Saturday, Jan. 12, 2013, as “Smithsonian Affiliation Day” in the state of South Dakota.

Visitors to the Cultural Heritage Center will enjoy free admission, refreshments, craft activities, presentations and videos from the Smithsonian from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. CST on Saturday, Jan. 12.

“The Smithsonian is very proud of its new affiliation with the South Dakota State Historical Society and its State History Museum,” Closter said. “The Historical Society has a well-deserved reputation for preserving the heritage of South Dakota through its scholarship, exhibitions and education programs. Our partnership offers the opportunity to underscore the importance of history as a source of inspiration in our daily lives and in the years ahead.”

As part of the new affiliation, the museum staff in the Cultural Heritage Center will work with educators at Smithsonian museums to create new educational programming for schools through a distance learning program and for the general public. The affiliation provides the opportunity to borrow artifacts and exhibits from the Smithsonian.

Affiliates also have the opportunity to send staff to Washington through the Visiting Professionals Program, as well as seek potential interns from colleges and universities around the state for joint projects.

In addition, the new affiliation will bring longer term artifact and exhibit loans to the museum as it begins the task of planning new exhibits and adding new materials to displays currently available at the Cultural Heritage Center.

“The Smithsonian name is magical, and it brings with it great opportunity to expand our visitor services and outreach activities,” said Jay Smith, Director of the Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society, “We are proud of our facility, and now to be associated with one of the greatest museums in the world is a tremendous honor and privilege.

“The Smithsonian Institution’s emphasis on heritage, preservation and education are ideas that are at the core of our mission to collect, preserve, and interpret the rich heritage and complex history of our state,” Smith continued. “We look forward to working with Smithsonian scholars, staff and administration as we bring a bit of the Smithsonian to South Dakota, and, in turn, we take a little bit of South Dakota to Washington D.C.”

About Smithsonian Affiliations

Established in 1996, Smithsonian Affiliations is a national outreach program that develops collaborative partnerships with museums and educational and cultural organizations to share Smithsonian Institution resources with Americans in their own communities. Smithsonian Affiliations works with affiliates to enrich communities with Smithsonian scholars, public programs, and professional development opportunities. More information about the Smithsonian Affiliations program and a list of current affiliates are available at www.affiliations.si.edu.

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