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Bunnies Rock! at Family Fun Saturday April 8 at Cultural Heritage Center

PIERRE, S.D. -- Young bunnies are a sure sign of spring and they will be the focus for Family Fun Saturday "Bunnies Rock!" at the Cultural Heritage Center on April 8 from 10-11:30 a.m. CDT.

Visitors can make a decorative bunny cup and color some wooden eggs to go in it. All supplies are provided and children should be accompanied by an adult. There is no fee to attend or participate in the activity.

The Easter Bunny came to America with German immigrants in the 1700s. Children made nests where the bunny laid colored eggs. The custom spread across the U.S. and today the bunny brings chocolate and other candy in addition to colored eggs in decorated baskets. Since bunnies and hares have large litters they became symbols of new life and fertility as winter exits and spring arrives.

Egg rolling is a traditional game played with eggs at Easter. The egg roll is a race where children push an egg through the grass with a long-handled spoon.

"We are excited to bring this activity to Family Fun Saturday," said Jay Smith, museum director. "All of our activities are fun for kids and adults alike, and each brings with it the concepts of learning through play."

According to tradition, Dolly Madison, wife of President James Madison, began the Capitol Egg Roll in 1814. The event was originally held on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol. To protect a new lawn planted in 1877, Congress passed a law making it illegal to use the grounds as a children's playground. President Rutherford B. Hayes and his wife Lucy, at the request of a number of children, moved the Egg Roll to the White House.

President Hayes and his wife officially opened the White House grounds for egg rolling on Easter Monday in 1878. Successive presidents continued the tradition, and the event has been held on the South Lawn ever since.

Locally, the 64th Annual Elks Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Easter Sunday, April 16, on the South Dakota Governor's Residence lawn.

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About the South Dakota State Historical Society

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Education. 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.