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State Historical Society to host Smithsonian Sunday Program on Jan. 11

PIERRE, S.D. – The Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society will host a special webcast of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Air & Space Museum program entitled, “NASA’s Flying Saucer: Learning to Land on Mars” at 2 p.m. CST on Sunday, Jan. 11, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The program, in the Cultural Heritage Center’s education room, is offered in collaboration with the Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum and the Smithsonian Affiliations program.

In this “What’s New in Aerospace?” program, Ian Clark, principal investigator for the Low Density Supersonic Decelerator project at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, discusses the Mars Science Laboratory landing and describes the process and technologies used to land the Curiosity Rover on Mars. He provides historical context for the development of those technologies and talks about the need for improvements as we move to larger and larger payloads, and then briefly introduces the Low Density Supersonic Decelerator technology and discusses tests that are being conducted to mature the technologies.

“This is a fascinating program,” commented Jay Smith, museum director for the State Historical Society. “We feature experimental balloon technology that took place in South Dakota in our 20th Century section of ‘The South Dakota Experience,’ so it is very interesting to see NASA’s 21st century technology in that context.”

There is no fee to view the program, but standard admission fees apply for visitors wanting to go into the museum galleries. The program was originally broadcast Nov. 5 in the Smithsonian’s “Moving Beyond Earth” gallery as part of the “What’s New in Aerospace?” programming.

The State Historical Society became a Smithsonian Affiliate in January 2013, and it is the only affiliate in South Dakota. Since 2013, the museum has hosted a “Smithsonian Sunday” program on the second Sunday of each month.

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About the South Dakota State Historical Society

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

About Smithsonian Affiliations

Established in 1996, Smithsonian Affiliations is a national outreach program that develops long-term collaborative partnerships with museums, educational and cultural organizations to enrich communities with Smithsonian resources. The long-term goal of Smithsonian Affiliations is to facilitate a two-way relationship among Affiliate organizations and the Smithsonian Institution to increase discovery and inspire lifelong learning in communities across America. More information about the Smithsonian Affiliations program and Affiliate activity is available at <https://affiliations.si.edu>.