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State Historical Society's Sioux Horse Effigy Returned Following International Exhibition: Celebration Planned for Oct. 10-12

PIERRE, S.D. -- Representatives of the South Dakota State Historical Society announce the return of South Dakota's Great Sioux Horse Effigy to the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The effigy was returned to the museum collection storage area of the Cultural Heritage Center. Immediate plans for redisplaying the effigy include a special Return Celebration Oct. 10-12 at the Cultural Heritage Center.

"We are pleased to relate to the citizens of South Dakota that the effigy has returned to us in excellent condition, with no damage and no signs of wear," said Jay D. Vogt, director of the State Historical Society.

The return follows the effigy's display as part of the international touring exhibition "The Plains Indians: Artists of Earth and Sky." The exhibition of Plains Indian masterworks, which featured the iconic effigy, was on display beginning April 2014 in Paris at musée du quai Branly, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Over 500,000 people viewed the exhibition at its three venues.

The effigy, which also serves as the logo of the State Historical Society, earned high praise at each venue, including acclaim from New York Times reviewer Holland Cotter, who wrote: "In a history of great sculpture, past and present, from the North American continent, it [the effigy] has a place in the highest pantheon."

"We wanted to do something special to mark the return of the effigy to South Dakota," said Jay Smith, museum director for the State Historical Society. "We are designing a new display for the effigy that will include loaned effigies from the State Historical Society of North Dakota and the National Museum of the American Indian."

The display coming in October is groundbreaking, Smith said, in that it features two effigies known to have been carved by Hunkpapa Lakota leader No Two Horns, who is also believed to be the maker of the Great Sioux Horse Effigy.

"While evidence suggests that No Two Horns made our wonderful artifact, there has been some mystery about its origins because our research and provenance does not prove beyond a shadow of doubt," Smith said. "So, for the first time we are aware of, these three effigies will be on display at the same time. Our visitors will be able to view the artifacts, review some of the evidence and judge for themselves."

The new display featuring the effigies will be on exhibit for approximately two years. This will be the first time the South Dakota State Historical Society has borrowed an artifact from a Smithsonian Museum since becoming a Smithsonian Affiliate in 2013.

Along with the new display will be a series of events beginning on Saturday, Oct. 10, which will include presentations, craft demonstrations by American Indian artists from South Dakota, and programs about Sitting Bull and the Good Earth State Park at Blood Run.

On Sunday, Oct. 11, there will be a make-and-take activity and American Indian craft demonstrations at the Cultural Heritage Center, as well as a special performance by Indian hoop dancers inside the Capitol dome that afternoon.

A blessing ceremony will take place at the Cultural Heritage Center on Monday, Oct. 12, as part of Native American Day celebrations.

“Additionally, we are going to host a special dinner on Sunday evening the 11th, featuring speakers Kevin Gover, the director of the National Museum of the American Indian; and Gaylord Torrence, senior curator of American Indian Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,” said Vogt. “With South Dakota Public Broadcasting taping the dinner for future broadcast purposes, we hope to spread the word about the importance of our Indian history in South Dakota, as well as the amazing collections at the Cultural Heritage Center.”

A full schedule of the Great Sioux Horse Effigy Return Celebration events, programs and other activities will be released in late July or early August, and information about the special dinner will be available soon thereafter.

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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.