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September Smithsonian Saturday program at Cultural Heritage Center focuses on “The Mars Generation”

PIERRE, S.D. – The next “Smithsonian Saturday” program at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre will be held on Saturday, Sept. 10, at 2 p.m. CDT and it will focus space exploration.

The featured program is entitled, “The Mars Generation: A Conversation with Astronaut Christina Koch” and it was originally broadcast by the Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum on June 15, 2016. There is no fee to attend this program, but regular admission fees apply to visit the museum exhibits.

The webcast focuses on the progress following 16 years of astronauts living and working on the International Space Station and the fact that NASA astronauts are setting their sights on a new destination – Mars. As they select new astronaut candidates, NASA is training a generation of engineers, scientists, pilots, medical professionals and other researchers for an unparalleled and perilous journey to the Red Planet.

Center for Earth and Planetary Studies planetary scientist Emily Martin and NASA astronaut Christina Koch discuss how you can be one of those first humans to place boot prints on Mars. Koch will speak about being part of the Mars generation, her path to becoming an astronaut, her training with NASA, and the importance of STEM education to the future of human spaceflight, especially for young women.

“We are really excited to offer this program,” commented Jay Smith, museum director for the South Dakota State Historical Society. “Christina Koch shares great insights into her background and studies, which will make this a great program for families. Mars exploration is a fascinating topic, so this will be a fun program for all audiences.”

The next “Smithsonian Saturday” will be held on Saturday, Oct. 1. The program will feature work being conducted on historical topics in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution.

The South Dakota State Historical Society became a Smithsonian Affiliate in January 2013 and it is the only affiliate in South Dakota.

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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.

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>.