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### **Historical Society book on the Great Depression, New Deal now available**

PIERRE, S.D.—In “A New Deal for South Dakota: Drought, Depression, and Relief, 1920–1941,” R. Alton Lee examines the New Deal’s effect on families, farmers, miners, youth, women, American Indians and others living during the Great Depression.

Published by the South Dakota State Historical Society, Lee’s book evaluates South Dakotans’ efforts to avoid both starvation and federal dependence as they endured the worst natural and economic disaster of modern times.

At the height of the depression, New Deal programs supported nearly half of the state’s population. With drought, grasshoppers and low commodity prices delivering the final blows in a long economic slump, many residents fled. Others held on with the aid of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s relief programs, administered by politicians like Tom Berry, South Dakota’s colorful Democratic governor.

“The Great Depression is a time that many of the state’s residents lived through or grew up hearing stories about,” says Jay D. Vogt, director of the South Dakota State Historical Society. “Lee takes our collective memory a step further to look behind the scenes at what made possible the aid that helped many families survive and stay to raise the next generation.”

The built landscape and economic underpinnings of present-day South Dakota are legacies of this era. Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration projects expanded the state’s infrastructure with dams, civic facilities and highways that are still used today. Other programs offered additional opportunities for young people, women and minorities. The story is one of desperate times, intense rivalries and rare moments of cooperation as a devastated Great Plains state fought to keep from going under.

Lee is professor emeritus of history at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. He has written widely on the political history of the Great Plains.

“A New Deal for South Dakota: Drought, Depression, and Relief, 1920–1941” is available for \$24.95, plus shipping and tax. It can be ordered directly from the South Dakota Historical Society Press at [www.sdhspress.com](http://www.sdhspress.com) or by calling (605) 773-6009. Follow the South Dakota Historical Society Press on Facebook (SDHS Press) and Twitter (@sdhspress) for more.

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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](http://www.history.sd.gov) for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.*