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New display about Mount Rushmore opens at Cultural Heritage Center

PIERRE, S.D. – A new display consisting of two cases and some graphics about the construction of Mount Rushmore National Memorial recently opened at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the monument's completion.

The exhibit features numerous photographs and artifacts, including original plaster casts sculpted by monument artist Gutzon Borglum and a bosun chair used by workmen during the monument's carving.

Officials declared Mount Rushmore complete in 1941 after 14 years of work. Borglum was responsible for creating the monument, but South Dakota historian Doane Robinson provided the inspiration and original idea for the monument.

Two summer interns with the Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society, Ariel Marie Reker and Lexie Doerr, created the display. Reker completed all the research, writing and organizing of the exhibit. Doerr worked on the design, format and installation. Together they put together an exhibit that concisely tells the story of the national monument.

"We are happy to be able to have this display available to coincide with such an important anniversary of a South Dakota gem and an American icon," said Jay Smith, museum director. "It is always good to pull some of these rarely seen items out from storage and put them on exhibit. It was an excellent learning opportunity for our interns and we are pleased that the project will have a direct public benefit."

The display is located in the front of the museum's primary gallery, through the end of the year. There is a small admission fee for adults; children are always free. The museum is open 9 a.m.-6:30 p.m. CDT Monday-Saturday and 1-4:30 p.m. Sundays.

Another display in the Cultural Heritage Center involving Mount Rushmore can be found in the State Archives. Two letters between Robinson and Borglum from 1924 suggesting a sculpture are exhibited. There is no charge to see that display. Archives hours are 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday and the first Saturday of most months.

Editor's Note: Museum interns Lexie Doerr, left, and Ariel Marie Reker have created a display at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre noting the 75th anniversary of the completion of Mount Rushmore National Memorial. (Photo courtesy South Dakota State Historical Society)

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.