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Cowboy Life to be Celebrated by History and Heritage Book Club

PIERRE, S.D. – The History and Heritage Book Club tips its cowboy hat to South Dakota's western heritage at its September meeting.

"Dakota Cowboy" by Ike Blasingame will be discussed when the book club meets at 7 p.m. CDT on Tuesday, Sept. 10, at the Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Center, 210 Verendrye Dr., Fort Pierre. The event is free and everyone is welcome to attend.

"We're pleased to help commemorate this aspect of South Dakota's history. In addition to discussing 'Dakota Cowboy', local cowboy Willie Cowan will speak and Plains Folk will perform cowboy songs," said Michael Lewis, president of the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation.

The foundation is the nonprofit fundraising partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society and, along with the SDSHS Press, sponsors the History and Heritage Book Club.

The meeting will be a forerunner of the Dakota Western Heritage Festival, which takes place on Sept. 14-15 at the Fort Pierre Expo Center. An organizer of the festival, Gary Heintz, will serve as discussion leader at the History and Heritage Book Club.

In "*Dakota Cowboy*," Blasingame writes of his life as a cowboy for the Matador Land and Cattle Company in South Dakota from approximately 1904-1912. When the Bureau of Indian Affairs decided to lease the Cheyenne River Reservation, the Matador successfully bid on tracts. Blasingame stayed in South Dakota after the Matador left, owning a ranch near the Little Moreau River.

Cowan grew up near Highmore, where his father Art traded, bought, sold and trained horses. Cowan became active in rodeo and went to college in Texas on a rodeo scholarship. He was active in rodeo when he returned to live in South Dakota and was involved with Fort Pierre's 4th of July rodeo for many years. In 2006, Cowan was chosen as "Rodeo Cowboy Great" by the Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Center.

"Dakota Cowboy" is available at the Heritage Stores at the Cultural Heritage Center and the Capitol. Book club members receive a 10-percent discount and South Dakota State Historical Society members receive an additional 5-percent discount when they purchase the book at either Heritage Store.

For more information about the event, call (605) 773-6006.

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation is a private charitable nonprofit that seeks funding to assist the South Dakota State Historical Society in programming and projects to preserve South Dakota's history and heritage for future generations.

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.