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### **State Historical Society to Host Program about Experimental Airmail on May 11**

PIERRE, S.D. – The Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society will host a special webcast of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Postal Museum program from Curator Nancy A. Pope entitled, “Curator Talk: Experimental Airmail” at 2 p.m. CDT on Sunday, May 11, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The program, in the center’s education room, is hosted by the National Postal Museum. In it, Pope shares the dangerous and fascinating story of early experimental airmail flights and the centennial of the Wiseman-Cooke flight from Petaluma to Santa Rosa, Calif. From 1911 to 1914, postmasters across the country were urged to get involved with local aviation events and encourage pilots to carry mail on their flights.

In her presentation, Pope refers to the following famous pilots and aviators: John Wise, the Wright Brothers, Glenn L. Curtiss, Frederick Wiseman, Henri Pequet, Gustav Hamel, Jule Vedrines, Earle Ovington, Cal Rogers, Walter Brookins, Lincoln Beachey, Charles Walsh, Farnum T. Fish, Horace Kearney, Max Lillie, Paul Peck, Walter Edwards, Katherine Stinson and Joseph Stevenson.

“This is a very interesting program,” said Jay Smith, director of the Museum of the State Historical Society. “We take the delivery of mail for granted today, especially with instantaneous e-mail readily available. Less than 100 years ago, however, air mail was a rather exciting and sometimes dangerous proposition. The program is a great reminder of how much our society has changed.”

There is no fee to view the program, but standard admission fees apply for visitors wanting to go into the museum galleries. “Curator Talk: Experimental Airmail” was originally broadcast on February 18, 2011, at the National Postal Museum.

The State Historical Society became a Smithsonian Affiliate in January 2013 and it is the only one in South Dakota. Since then, the museum has hosted a “Smithsonian Sunday” program the second Sunday of each month.

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#### ***About the South Dakota State Historical Society***

*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](http://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>.*