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State Historical Society presenting Governor's Awards for History

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota State Historical Society will be presenting the Governor's Awards for History on Saturday, April 5, during its annual history conference in Pierre.

Three individuals and two organizations are being recognized by the State Historical Society for their efforts in preserving state history.

The award winners include Barbara Johnson of Aberdeen, Steve Olson of Watertown, Harl A. Dalstrom of Omaha, Neb., The Outdoor Campus of Sioux Falls and the Whitewood Public Library in Whitewood.

"These people and organizations are to be commended for their efforts at preserving our state's history," said Gov. Dennis Daugaard. "Because of their work, our past will be kept alive for future generations in South Dakota."

"We are pleased to give out these awards," added Jay D. Vogt, director of the State Historical Society. "These are just a few of the shining examples of how people across the state and beyond are helping us in our efforts to promote, nurture and sustain South Dakota history."

Johnson is the individual award winner. She is being recognized for her work in preserving stained glass throughout the state. Johnson has traveled throughout South Dakota and the nation researching the topic and gave more than 50 presentations on it in the past year in South Dakota alone. She was featured in the Emmy-award nominated South Dakota Public Television documentary "Light of the Prairie: South Dakota Stained Glass" and is presently working on a book about stained glass in the American West.

Olson was named the 2014 History Teacher of the Year. He teaches at Watertown Middle School; he has been there 25 of his 33 years in the profession. Olson has been called a "storyteller extraordinaire" and shares stories with his students that make history real while finding a way to connect them to today at the same time. Olson's goal is to not only make his students knowledgeable about history, but to make them good citizens.

Dalstrom, a professor emeritus of history at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, is the winner of the Herbert S. Schell Award for best article in the previous year's "South Dakota History," the State Historical Society's award-winning quarterly journal. His article, "'Snake hunting has been shamefully neglected': A. M. Jackley and Rattlesnake Abatement in South Dakota," appeared in the Fall 2013 issue of the journal. Dalstrom's

article explores the life and career of Albert M. Jackley, who is sometimes called the “Saint Patrick of South Dakota” for his work to eliminate the rattlesnakes that could pose a threat to the state’s west river residents. Jackley worked with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture from the 1930s through the 1950s on several novel approaches to rattlesnake control.

The Outdoor Campus is an organizational winner. The organization has been doing “a history lesson with a twist” for many years, as every year hundreds of Sioux Falls-area fourth graders come to The Outdoor Campus to learn about Lewis and Clark, who explored the Louisiana Purchase for President Jefferson from 1804-1806. The hands-on history lesson focuses on the outdoor skills the Corps of Discovery needed to survive their journey north and south in South Dakota.

A second organizational winner is the Whitewood Public Library. The commitment of the library staff to gather and file historical information about their small historical Black Hills town just west of Sturgis on Interstate 90 is commendable. Their history-gathering mission resulted in several publications comprising the Whitewood Library Historical Collection, noting the 125-year history of Whitewood in 2013. Staff assisted Whitewood sixth graders in publishing “A Journey Through Time: Whitewood Schools, 1888-2013.”

The Saturday awards luncheon is part of this year’s State Historical Society annual history conference, taking place Friday and Saturday in Pierre. This year’s theme is “A South Dakota Education: The History of Higher Learning in the State.” Registrations are still being accepted. Call (605) 773-6000 for more information or visit www.history.sd.gov.

The State Historical Society is headquartered at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. For more information, visit www.history.sd.gov or call (605) 773-3458.

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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 Institute, 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.