

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Aug. 26, 2014

CONTACT: Jeff Mammenga, Media Coordinator, (605) 773-6000,
Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us

Cultural Heritage Center to Continue Offering Free Admission to Active Duty Military Families after Labor Day

PIERRE, S.D. – Officials with the South Dakota State Historical Society have announced that the museum in the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre will continue to provide free admission to active duty military families – like those presently offered within the Blue Star Museums program -- after the Blue Star program ends on Labor Day.

The Blue Star Museums program is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense and more than 2,000 museums across America to offer free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

“We are delighted to participate in the Blue Star Families program, and we appreciate the coordination of the program that NEA provides, but we felt that continuing the benefits of the program throughout the rest of the year was important to those families making sacrifices in service to the country,” said Jay Smith, director of the Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society. “Nearly a hundred people have utilized the program since Memorial Day, and our announcement simply reflects our ongoing commitment to the program and military families.”

“Continuing the program throughout the year is a great way for us to honor those serving in the military as well as the many sacrifices their families make,” said Jay Vogt, director of the South Dakota State Historical Society. “South Dakotans enjoy a proud tradition of military service, so we hope that many service men, women and their families will visit the Cultural Heritage Center throughout the year and enjoy the exhibits and programs that demonstrate the history and culture of South Dakota.”

The free admission program is available to any bearer of a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC), a DD Form 1173 ID card, or a DD Form 1173-1 ID card, which includes active duty U.S. military -- Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserve, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps and NOAA Commissioned Corps -- and up to five family members.

Blue Star Families is a national, nonprofit network of military families from all ranks and services, including guard and reserve, dedicated to supporting, connecting and empowering military families. With partners, Blue Star Families hosts a robust array of morale and empowerment programs, including Books on Bases, Blue Star Museums, Operation Honor Corp, Blue Star Careers and Operation Appreciation.

Blue Star Families also works directly with the Department of Defense and senior members of local, state and federal government to bring the most important military family issues to light. Working in concert with fellow nonprofits, community advocates, and public officials, Blue Star Families raises awareness of the challenges and strengths of military family life and works to make military life more sustainable. The worldwide membership includes military spouses, children, parents, and friends, as well as service members, veterans and civilians. To learn more about Blue Star Families, visit <http://www.bluestarfam.org>.

-30-

About the 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 for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.