

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 3, 2014

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One Book South Dakota Author Tour coming to Pierre

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota One Book author Kathleen Norris will be coming to Pierre on Saturday, June 21.

Norris' novel "Dakota: A Spiritual Geography" was chosen by the North Dakota and South Dakota Humanities Councils as their first joint One Book to commemorate the 125th anniversary of statehood for both states. Both became states on Nov. 2, 1889. One Book is a program that encourages everyone in the states to read and discuss the same title.

Norris' program in Pierre will begin at 11 a.m. CDT at the Capitol Lake Visitors Center. She will discuss "Dakota," read excerpts from it, answer questions from the audience and sign copies of the book. The 50- to 60-minute program will be preceded by refreshments at 10:30 a.m., sponsored by Prairie Pages Bookseller and the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit fundraising partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society.

"We're pleased that Kathleen Norris will be making a presentation in Pierre during her two-week tour of North Dakota and South Dakota," said Foundation President Michael Lewis. "In 'Dakota,' Norris provides loving descriptions of the vast and starkly beautiful landscape, extremes of water and topography, and townspeople and farmers."

Norris was a successful poet on the East Coast when she returned to the house her grandparents built in Lemmon. Her move to Lemmon was the inspiration for her first book of nonfiction, "Dakota." The book was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year and was selected as one of the best books of the year by Library Journal. She and her husband, poet David Dwyer, made their home in Lemmon for more than 25 years. Widowed in 2003, Norris now lives in Hawaii and travels to the mainland regularly to lecture and teach.

To help people better understand "Dakota," Kathy Antonen of Rapid City will lead a discussion of the book at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, June 10, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. Antonen teaches English at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City.

"Kathy has been the discussion leader at previous book club meetings in Pierre. Because of her insights into books and her ability to draw comments from those attending the discussion, we knew we wanted her to return to Pierre to discuss 'Dakota,'" Lewis said.

The foundation and APT Book Club are sponsoring Antonen's appearance in Pierre, which is part of the History and Heritage Book Club.

Both Norris' and Antonen's programs are free and open to the public. The programs are made possible by grants from the South Dakota Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For more information about One Book events in Pierre, please call (605) 773-6006.

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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 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.