

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 31, 2014

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State Historical Society to Release New Book on Political Culture at USD Conference

PIERRE, S.D. — Across the country, election-night viewers typically see South Dakota as a “red” or Republican state, but is it really that simple? In their upcoming book from the South Dakota State Historical Society, editors Jon K. Lauck, John E. Miller and Donald C. Simmons, Jr., present 10 essays that focus on the unpredictability and inconsistencies in the state’s political culture. “The Plains Political Tradition: Essays on South Dakota Political Culture, Volume 2” will be released on Thursday, Nov. 13, at a conference hosted by the University of South Dakota in Vermillion.

“Our political heritage is much more varied and unique than people realize,” said Jay D. Vogt, director of the South Dakota State Historical Society, headquartered at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. “The editors continue to shed light on the South Dakota political experience—connecting it to the greater Midwestern and American setting.”

South Dakota’s political landscape is a mix of geographical variations and political subcultures that changes over time. The first volume of “The Plains Political Tradition” examined this complexity, and this new volume explores compelling stories of direct democracy, organized labor, West River identity, New Deal planning, Cold War loyalty, bicultural conservatism and the Christian Left—among other topics. Tracking the shifting dialogues that make the Great Plains unique, the authors and editors take South Dakota further into the growing study of modern political culture.

Authors of the essays in “The Plains Political Tradition” will discuss their topics in a series of panels at the USD conference, which runs from 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CST on Nov. 13. Tom Isern, University Distinguished Professor of History at North Dakota State University in Fargo, will give the luncheon keynote address. Contact Sandi Allred at sandi.allred@usd.edu or (605) 677-5242 to register. The event is free to the public.

“The Plains Political Tradition: Essays on South Dakota Political Culture, Volume 2” is available for \$22.95 plus shipping and tax and can be purchased through most bookstores or ordered directly from the South Dakota Historical Society Press. Visit www.sdshspress.com or call (605) 773-6009. For distribution information, contact the South Dakota Historical Society Press at orders@sdshspress.com.

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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.