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Smithsonian Night at Cultural Heritage Center to focus on New Deal program

PIERRE, S.D. – The Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre will host its monthly Smithsonian Night program on Tuesday, Nov. 17. The featured program at 7 p.m. CST is, “Soul of a People: Writing America’s Story.”

The 90-minute program, originally broadcast by the Smithsonian Channel, focuses on the Federal Writer’s Project, one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal programs under the umbrella of the Works Progress Administration during the depression of the 1930s. In the grip of the Great Depression, WPA writers searched for America and discovered the “Soul of a People.” This show explores one of the most controversial public assistance programs of its time and shows nothing less than the creation of America’s first-ever self-portrait.

“For anyone interested in studying American history, this is a must-see program,” said Jay Smith, museum director for the South Dakota State Historical Society. “The New Deal engendered a great deal of controversy in the nation, but it also produced a cultural dividend that we still experience today.”

On Smithsonian Night, the museum and Heritage Store at the Cultural Heritage Center will be open from 9 a.m.-8 p.m., giving visitors additional time in the early evening to visit the facility. There will be no fee to view the program, but standard admission fees will apply for visitors wanting to go into the museum galleries.

The State Historical Society became a Smithsonian Affiliate in January 2013 and is the only affiliate in South Dakota.

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About the South Dakota State Historical Society

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Education. 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.

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>.