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Smithsonian Night at Cultural Heritage Center focuses on organized mail crime

PIERRE, S.D. – The Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre will host its second Smithsonian Night program, “Organized Crime in the Mail,” on Tuesday, May 19, at 7 p.m. CDT.

This video presentation by Bill Oldfield explores the evidence and historic documents that postal inspectors used to track down organized crime bosses. In his presentation, Oldfield shares historic artifacts from his family’s collection, each relating to Mafia cases investigated by postal inspectors. Early 20th century cases such as “The Black Hand” are highlighted. The program was originally broadcast from the National Postal Museum.

“This is a fascinating and entertaining program,” said Museum Director Jay Smith. “Few people realize how common it once was to conduct criminal activity using the post office. This presentation is a terrific exploration of how mail fraud and other crimes were investigated, and usually thwarted, by postal investigators.”

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. Visitors are welcome to tour the museum and visit the Heritage Store from 4:30-8 p.m. during the extended evening hours leading up to and during the featured program. 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 South Dakota 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>.