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

### **Program about Northern Baseball League coming to Cultural Heritage Center**

PIERRE, S.D. – The Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre is hosting a program entitled, “10 Things You Did Not Know About the Northern League” on Saturday, July 18.

Paul Gertsen will give this presentation about the former Northern League of baseball teams in South Dakota in conjunction with the museum’s new exhibit “Play Ball! The National Pastime in South Dakota.” Gertsen’s program will address the history of a league that featured players such as future Major Leaguers Hank Aaron, Jim Palmer, Lou Brock and Willie Stargell.

There is no fee to attend the program in the center’s education room, but regular admission fees will apply to visit the baseball exhibit and museum galleries.

“The Northern League was once the highest level of professional baseball in South Dakota and an important minor league system in the upper Midwest,” said Jay Smith, museum director. “So many great players were on those teams, and its South Dakota roots run deep.”

Gertsen has strong South Dakota ties, raised in Aberdeen and a graduate of Huron High School. He lived in Pierre before taking a job with the Saint Paul Saints and later with the Minnesota Moose. He presently works for the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Gertsen recently donated a large collection of Northern League materials to the South Dakota State Historical Society, some of which are now on display in the museum’s baseball exhibit.

“I started collecting baseball cards in 1971, the same year I saw my first Aberdeen Pheasants games,” said Gertsen. “I have collected baseball memorabilia since that time, and started to build my Northern League collection -- slowly but surely -- in 1983. I also thought it was a fitting gift to the people of South Dakota, a thank you to the state that instilled so many valuable things in my upbringing.”

“We are especially excited to bring Paul Gertsen back to the Cultural Heritage Center to talk about the Northern League,” said Smith. “The Northern League played a major role in the history of baseball in South Dakota, and we are happy to share that story with our audience.”

*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](http://www.history.sd.gov) for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.*