

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 24, 2016

CONTACT: Jeff Mammenga, Media Coordinator, (605) 773-6000,
jeff.mammenga@state.sd.us

BNSF grant helps make State Historical Society photos available to the public

PIERRE, S.D. – A grant from a railway foundation will help ensure that photographs of railroads and other images of South Dakota belonging to the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre will be available online to the public.

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation has received a \$5,000 grant from the BNSF Railway Foundation to digitize photographs from the State Historical Society–Archives at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. In the process, a photo is converted to a digital image, catalogued and placed into an archive available to the public on the Internet.

“This grant helps make our photo collection more accessible to researchers and the public,” said Chelle (SHEL-ee) Somsen, director of the State Archives.

“The South Dakota State Historical Society--Archives contains more than 1 million images dating from territorial days to the present, with more photographs being added each year,” said foundation president Michael Lewis. “In the seven years of the digitization project, more than 55,000 images have been placed online. This project is not funded by the state of South Dakota, so annual funding must be secured through grants and donations. BNSF funds will be used to supplement other grants to support the ongoing expenses of the digitization project.”

The online photographs can be found on the State Archives’ website at <http://sddigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/>.

“The uniqueness and rarity of many of these images offer a glimpse into the early and continuing history of South Dakota,” Lewis said.

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation is the nonprofit fundraising partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society.

The State Archives is open 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. CDT Monday-Friday and the first Saturday each month.

The BNSF Railway Foundation has been the BNSF Railway’s main vehicle for charitable giving since 1996, when the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe railroads merged to form the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, now known as the BNSF Railway. The BNSF Railway operates in South Dakota and 27 other states, as well as three Canadian provinces.

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 the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation is a private charitable nonprofit that seeks funding to assist the South Dakota State Historical Society in programming and projects to preserve South Dakota's history and heritage for future generations.