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**Open house, celebration of South Dakota's Code Talkers
on Aug. 26 at Cultural Heritage Center**

PIERRE, S.D. -- The South Dakota State Historical Society will host a special celebration honoring South Dakota Code Talker Noah Whitebird, Sr. and the other South Dakota Code Talkers on Friday, Aug. 26, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

There will be an open house from 1:30-3 p.m. CDT, with a special ceremony taking place at 2 p.m. with Jay D. Vogt, director of the South Dakota State Historical Society, serving as emcee.

The cornerstone of the event will be the donation of the Congressional Code Talker Medal given to Noah Whitebird, Sr. for his service as a Code Talker during World War II. The Whitebird family will be on hand to share this donation, along with other artifacts, with the public and State Historical Society officials.

Beginning at 2 p.m., three prominent speakers will discuss the legacy and importance of South Dakota's Code Talkers who served in both World War I and II:

- Secretary Steve Emery, South Dakota Department of Tribal Relations;
- Secretary Larry Zimmerman, South Dakota Veterans Affairs;
- Francis Whitebird, Board of Trustees, South Dakota State Historical Society

Refreshments will be available for the open house from 1:30-3 p.m. and the public is invited to attend the events.

"One of the reasons we are holding this ceremony is that the Whitebird family wants to be certain that the donation of Noah Whitebird's Congressional Code Talker Medal be used as a device to help educate present and future generations about the contributions of South Dakota's Code Talkers," said Jay Smith, director of the Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society. "It is an honor for us to accept the Whitebird family's donation and a great place for us to begin fulfilling our obligation to share this remarkable story with South Dakota's citizens and our many visitors."

The Code talkers were a group of American Indians who served the United States military in both World War I and World War II in communications, using native language to create a code that was unbreakable by enemy forces. Sixty-nine Lakota, Dakota and Nakota American Indians from South Dakota served in this capacity. Noah Whitebird, Sr. from the Rosebud Sioux tribe, served in the 9th Army Air Corps and 900 Signal Depot Company with distinction.

For more information about event call (605) 773-3458.

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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.