

Conversation between Boards is good for business objectives

In early September, the South Dakota State Historical Society Board of Trustees and the South Dakota Heritage Fund Board of Directors are meeting together to discuss with the office directors the mission and goals of the State Historical Society. The Board of Trustees is the advisory and policy board for the Society. One-half of the members are appointed by the Governor and one-half are elected by the membership. This hybrid board structure is unique in state government, but it works well in bringing professional talent and diverse expertise to the organization. The law outlines the board's responsibilities. The Heritage Fund is the Society's nonprofit partner, largely responsible for fund raising for the Society and managing non-state funds for special functions and projects.

At the Board of Trustees' last meeting prior to the History Conference in May, they met briefly with the Heritage Fund Board of Directors. Because of the Society's budget reduction during the last legislative session, the boards discussed how the Society would continue its outstanding service and work throughout the state. The Society is also considering various special projects that will need additional financial support. Consequently, the issues of goals and money came up, and it was decided that further conversation of these topics, as well as a discussion of each board's responsibilities and priorities, was needed.

Both boards currently have a significant number of members who

From the SDSHS Director



Jay D. Vogt

have recently joined the boards, and this is also a good opportunity to meet them. One immediate goal would be for the boards to develop an understanding and appreciation for the work of each other's board. Because of their different functions, the Board of Trustees has more of an academic bent, and the Heritage Fund Board of Directors is more focused toward business. Having these varied perspectives is valuable to the State Historical Society.

A retreat of this type can be a little unsettling. Although the Society has received numerous national awards, staff members have leadership roles in various history organizations, and the Society enjoys good support from the boards and state government, I am concerned that our work will not meet expectations. The Society has a

(See "Vogt," Page 2)

Field Reports

The Brown County Historical Society held its summer meeting at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Groton. The historical society owns the 127-year-old structure, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the single remaining example of a rural board-and-batten Episcopal Church in South Dakota.

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Fourteen people are being inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame this year during ceremonies that will be held Sept. 9-10 in Oacoma.

Those to be inducted, by category, include:

Historical -- Herb and Jan Conn, Don Barnett and Watson Parker

General -- Gene Abdallah
Professional -- Gary Conradi, Dana Dykhouse, Curtis Hage, William (Bill) Hinks, Amiel "Doc" Redfish, Donus Roberts and Dr. Lynn Gregory Seppala

General & Professional -- Norman McKie

Arts & Entertainment -- Tony Dean

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The 19th annual West River History Conference is Sept. 22-24 in Rapid City. This year's theme is "Lowdowns & Showdowns" - Western Events and Happenings. Make plans today to attend and

(See "More," Page 2)

More Field Reports

Continued from Page 1

discover more about your heritage. For more information contact: West River History Conference, Inc., PO Box 9276, Rapid City, SD 57709; phone (605) 343-4852; email

wrhc@shebbyleetours.com; website <http://wrhcsd.wordpress.com/home> The conference is made possible with support by the South Dakota Humanities Council, the Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission, the Society of Black Hills Pioneers; and the Black Hills Corral, Westerners, International.

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The Hyde County Historical & Genealogical Society was formed in 1973 “to bring together those people interested in the history of Hyde County and to help those interested in genealogy to trace their ancestral line or line of decent.” Meetings are held the third Saturday of each month in Highmore. Current officers include: President -- Beth A. Mangus-Roberts; Vice-President -- Nadine Day; Secretary

-- Carol Zilverberg; Treasurer -- Maurine Bouzek; Corresponding Secretary -- Skyla Ratzlaff; and Directors -- Sandra Cermak (3-year), Janice Cermak-Sandmeier (2-year) and Connie Hageman (1-year).

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The Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Center in Fort Pierre is hosting a branding event on Saturday, Sept. 17, that will allow owners of cattle or horse brands to burn their brand into the timbers of the rodeo center walkway. For more information contact Janice at the rodeo center at (605) 494-1094.

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The South Dakota State Railroad Museum in Hill City held an interesting fundraiser on Aug. 20. Called “Spy Train 2,” participants departed from the 1880 Train’s Hill City Depot and solved the mystery of who was “breeding an evil threat to the Black Hills” on their journey.

SDSHS Notes

The South Dakota State Historical Society Press recently released two new books.

Six: A Football Coach’s Journey to a National Record, tells the story of the inspiring life of Coach Bill Welsh, the players of the record-setting Claremont Honkers (who won 61 six-man football games in a row from 1947-1953), and the games Welsh’s teams played against opponents from all over the state. *Six* sells for \$16.95, plus tax and shipping.

Principle over Party: The Farmers’ Alliance and Populism in South Dakota, shines light on the prominent South Dakotans who strode down the path to the progressive agrarian politics that dominated the state, and much of the country, in the late 1880s and early 1890s. The book sells for \$32.95, plus tax and shipping.

For more information on both books, or to order, visit www.sdshepress.com or call (605) 773-6009.

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Applications for the fall Deadwood Fund grant program are due on Oct. 1. The program is designed to encourage large-scale restoration or rehabilitation of historic properties by individuals, organizations or public agencies. Grants for work beginning Jan. 1, 2012, will be awarded in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000. The grant amount must be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis from nonfederal and nonstate sources. For more information, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at <http://history.sd.gov/Preservation/FundingOpps/FundingOpportunities.aspx> or call (605) 773-3458.

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Beginning Tuesday, Sept. 6, summer hours end for the museum in the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. Hours will be 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. CST Monday-Saturday, and 1-4:30 p.m. on Sundays and holidays. Group tours are available by calling (605) 773-6000.

Vogt

Continued from page 1

fantastic staff, dedicated and hard-working. However, despite what appears to be a generous budget and staffing level, we are quite limited in our resources, and I am pleased to say, we are working above and beyond capacity.

The Society’s strategic goals include: 1. Providing leadership in the field of state and regional history; 2. Collecting and preserving information and artifacts reflecting the history and culture of South Dakota and its people, 3. Researching the history of South Dakota in order to share the value of the historical experience with the widest audience, 4. Providing appropriate resources for the teaching of South Dakota history among all age groups, and 5. Developing a strong financial base of support from public and private

sources. These are challenging goals to fulfill, and your State Historical Society seeks to meet them every day.

However, a conversation about the function and course of the South Dakota State Historical Society is important to have. Bringing together the knowledge and expertise from both the Board of Trustees and the Heritage Fund Board of Directors can better equip the Society to serve the citizens of South Dakota and collect, preserve, interpret and promote the history of our great state. As budgets get tighter and new initiatives develop, we cannot necessarily continue with business as usual. We will need to adapt and grow to meet the challenges ahead of us.

I invite you to examine your operation and determine how best to face the future and continue in safekeeping the history of your community and the State of South Dakota. Conversation is good for business. jdv