

Hoofprints

A bi-monthly publication for local history groups

Taking the right StEPs can improve your organization

StEPs is a history-based program that is intended to allow a history organization to take a look at itself and determine what it can do to improve. StEPs stands for the **Standards and Excellence Program**. Designed for small- and mid-sized museums, historic houses, historical societies and other history organizations, StEPs is a voluntary, self-assessment and improvement program developed by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). The six standards sections include: (1) mission, vision, and governance; (2) audience; (3) interpretation; (4) stewardship of collections; (5) stewardship of historic structures and landscapes; and (6) management.

StEPs is meant specifically for history organizations. More importantly, your organization does not have to apply or qualify to be eligible to participate in the program. Your museum or historical society is ready to begin the StEPs self-study when it is **interested** in learning more about museum standards; **optimistic** that addressing standards can bring internal and external opportunities, help the organization better serve its community, and improve long-term sustainability; **willing** to take a close look at its policies and practices and possibly address issues and have frank discussions that some people may find uncomfortable; **eager** for institutional change even if it means that some long-held traditions and practices may need to change; and **enthusiastic** about planning and setting goals.

From the SDSHS Director



Jay D. Vogt

The cost for StEPs is a one-time payment of \$150 for AASLH institutional members or \$265 for non-members, which includes a one-year institutional membership. Once enrolled, your organization works at its own pace using the program workbook to assess its current performance levels (basic, good or better) for each standard. The workbook becomes a valuable tool for documenting current performance levels and future plans, measuring progress, and maintaining continuity. The self-directed program encourages an organization to celebrate its successes and quality work while identifying areas that need improvement and work on

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Field Reports

This year's 20th annual West River History Conference is Oct. 4-6 in Rapid City. The theme is "Romanticism of the West — Touching our Roots." Topics should be submitted with a title and brief description before Sept. 1 in order to be included in the program. Cash prizes for the best papers in adult and student categories will be awarded. Papers on any topic relating to the history of the region are always welcome. The Bob Lee Award, named for the noted South Dakota historian and journalist, honors the best paper on frontier military history. For more information contact: West River History Conference, Inc., PO Box 9276, Rapid City, SD 57709; Phone: (605) 343-4852; Email: wrhc@shebbyleotours.com; Website: <http://wrhcsd.wordpress.com/home>

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This year's officers of the Brown County Historical Society in Aberdeen include: President — Sherri Rawstern; Vice-President — Brad Tennant; Secretary — Jean Rahja; Treasurer — Dennis White; and Board Members — Evelyn Blum, Rose Kraft and Marie Schumacher. Meetings are planned for April 14, July 14 and to be announced in the fall. The society has been joined by the Brown County Territorial Pioneers. Among the society's activities is support of the Dacotah Prairie Museum in Aberdeen.

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More Field Reports

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The Dalesburg Scandinavian Association works to preserve and promote the heritages of Dalesburg Lutheran Church and the Dalesburg Community in the Vermillion area. Current officers include: President and Membership — Ron Johnson; Treasurer — Connie Richards; Historian — Pat Norin; ASI Liaison — Lorraine Carlson; Publicity — James Peterson; Website — Jeff Erickson; Officers-at-Large — Carol Shubeck and Brendyn Richards; Ex Officio Officer — Pastor Chapman. The association hosts a Midsummer Festival each June, has an Annual Meeting each November, and has an annual Celebration of the St. Lucia Tradition in December. For more information, visit the association website at www.dalesburg.org, or contact Johnson at rjohnson@bmtc.net or (605) 253-2575 evenings.

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The Elkton Museum and Historical Society held a fund-raising Bridal Shower last year at the Elkton Community Center that netted the organization almost \$500 from ticket sales, donations and memberships. The event had 40 tables containing photographs, keepsakes, invitations and other wedding mementos, in addition to 25 wedding dresses displayed around the room. The program included the history of the museum, wedding traditions, wedding humor, a comical skit about getting the marriage license, and several games that guests

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them as funding and time allow.

Over 350 history organizations nationwide are using the StEPs program. StEPs is a good starting point for smaller or mid-sized history organizations because it offers education and awareness of best practices and standards. Your organization could receive up to 18 certificates for meeting performance indicators, and achieve recognition for improving your organization as you seek grants and participate in award programs. To learn more or enroll, visit www.aaslh.org/steps.htm or call Cherie Cook at 573-893-5162 or cook@aaslh.org. Best of success. jdv

participated in. The wedding show continued with 14 models, wearing different styles of dresses from different eras and escorted by a male board member. There were also several girls modeling bridesmaid dresses, some ring bearers and a flower girl. The 77 guests enjoyed a lunch of wedding cake, sandwiches and coffee, etc.

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In recognition of Billy Etbauer's five world bronc championships, a large bronze statue will be created for the Casey Tibbs SD Rodeo Center in Fort Pierre. The statue will depict Ree Heights' Billy Etbauer scoring an 89 on Harry Vold's great saddle bronc, Painted Valley, to win the 2009 Cheyenne Frontier Days saddle bronc event. This will be the third life-size bronze statue introduced at the Center, following the statues of Casey Tibbs and Mattie Goff Newcombe.

This historic project was initiated by the late Johnny Smith who envisioned a "garden of large bronzes overlooking the mighty Missouri River" that would memorialize South Dakota's rodeo greats. Smith was a former board member of the Casey Tibbs Foundation and dedicated much of his life to the preservation of the Livestock Industry, and the men and women whose livelihoods depended on it.

The bronze statue is being created by nationally-known artist Tony Chytka, a Belle Fourche native, rancher and former champion bull rider. The large statue is scheduled for completion and unveiling at the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center in early 2013.

Chytka is crafting limited edition 15-inch high by 12-inch wide replicas of the large bronze, which will be offered for sale to fund the purchase and installation of the large bronze. Each maquette will be numbered by the sculptor and have Billy's signature on the bronze base. It will be mounted on a high quality wood base with an engraved brass nameplate. The first maquettes will be available for shipment in time for the 2012 Match of Champions Bronc Ride in Ft. Pierre on June 2, with other maquettes completed in the following months.

Interested parties can contact the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center at (605) 494-1094 for more information and numbered replica availability.

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The Children's Museum of South Dakota in Brookings made "this year's 'it' list honoring the 25 best new places," according to the January/February issue of Midwest Living Magazine. The magazine advises travelers to "leave time in your road trip itineraries for this phenomenal attraction."

The museum was the only South Dakota attraction included in the list that contained other points of interest in cities such as Chicago, Omaha, Kansas City, Grand Rapids and Minneapolis.

The museum, which has entertained guests from every state in the United States, is South Dakota's only broad-based, cross-discipline children's museum and consistently draws new visitors to the city of Brookings and to the state.

Jim Hagen, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Tourism, applauds the museum on behalf of the state's tourism industry. "We are very pleased to have the Children's Museum of South Dakota as a vital part of our tourism industry," Hagen said.

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The Historic Homestake Opera House in Lead hosted eight dancers of the Utah Repertory Dance Theatre from Salt Lake City on Feb. 26. Through the magic of dance, sound and light, the dancers explored atoms, molecules, states of matter, gravity, magnetism, life-cycles, oceans, the environment, machines and Newton's Law in a performance titled "Imagine That!"

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The 2012 annual conference of the South Dakota State Historical Society is April 13-14 at the Ramkota in Pierre. This year's theme is "Playing on the Plains: Sports and Recreation in South Dakota." Online registration is now available at www.history.sd.gov. Click on "About Us" and go to "History Conference." Registration materials were also mailed to SDSHS members in late February. The winners of the society's board of trustees election will be announced, and Gov. Dennis Daugaard is scheduled to present the Governor's Awards for History. For more information or to request registration materials, call (605) 773-6000 or email Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us