

For more information contact: Jeff Mammenga, South Dakota State Historical Society, 900 Governors Dr., Pierre, SD 57501
Phone — (605) 773-6000; Fax — (605) 773-6041; Email — Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us; Website — www.history.sd.gov



On hand to see Gov. Kristi Noem sign HB 1047 into law on March 10 were, standing from left, Sec. of Education Tiffany Sanderson, Former SDSHS Director Jay D. Vogt, State Archivist Chelle Somsen, State Historian and SDSHS Director Ben Jones, State Rep. Will Mortenson, State Sen. Maggie Sutton, Society Foundation CEO Catherine Forsch, and State Rep. Mike Weisgram. (SDSHS Photo)

HB 1047 gives Historical Society needed funds for renovation

We were very pleased that Gov. Kristi Noem included in her budget request a major renovation to the Cultural Heritage Center. The bill with the \$8.8 million in General Funds and \$3.3 million in other funds unanimously passed the House Education Committee, the Joint Appropriations Committee, and both chambers of the state legislature. With the signing into law of House Bill 1047, the State Engineer and the Department of Education will soon be taking bids to do the work.

That work consists of three main efforts. First, as the building was first constructed in 1989, there are several issues that need updating with the heating and cooling, the electrical, and other issues regarding more than 30 years of

(See Jones, P.2)



**From the SDSHS Director
Benjamin F. Jones**

Benjamin F. Jones

Field Reports

On Friday, June 17, at the Capitol Rotunda in Pierre, the public is invited to celebrate the Trail of Governors completion with the 10 a.m. unveiling of the last three statues of South Dakota's former Governors. They will honor Governors Andrew E. Lee of Vermillion, Frank M. Byrne of Faulkton and W.J. Bulow of Beresford. The only project of its kind in the country, the trail of life-sized bronzes of all 31 former Governors adorn the Capitol grounds and wind their way thru Pierre's business district to the Missouri River. Created by noted South Dakota artists, the Trail tells the visitor about our state's history and culture and the life and times of our great leaders. Future Governors' statues will be added as each leaves office. For more information follow the project at: www.trailofgovernors.com.

####

Dwight Vaught is the new director of the National Music Museum in Vermillion, as of Dec. 27, 2021. Vaught is a doctoral candidate in Public Administration at the University of Illinois-Springfield. Since 2018, he served as house manager for the performing arts at UIS. He has worked with four universities and several independent non-profit organizations, specializing in arts and humanities programming, outreach programming, fundraising and facility management. The NMM is preparing to reopen the historic wing of its facility, with 12,000 square feet of new exhibitions, in 2023.

See "More," Page 2

More Field Reports

Continued from Page 1

The Grant County Historical Society, based in Milbank, is in the process of selling the historic Congregational Church in Milbank. The purchaser is “Next Town Ministries” of Watertown. The purchase price is the same amount the society paid for the church in October of 2012 — \$1. Members of the GCHS board of directors are in favor of returning this historic church to active service as a place of worship, as it had been from its dedication in 1884 until 2012, a period of 128 years.

Current officers of the GCHS are:
President — Arlo Levisen, Vice-President — Mark Leddy, Secretary —

Jones

(Continued from Page 1)

wear and tear. Secondly, our ability to continue to collect artifacts and archival documents is nearing an end due to diminishing space. Some of this funding will go towards installing a mezzanine within the existing high ceilings of the archival and museum storage spaces so that we can continue to collect and preserve South Dakota’s history. We will also take the opportunity to modernize the staff’s workspaces and improve and modernize the public research room and other public spaces. Lastly, we will enhance our museum exhibits to be more accessible for today’s audiences and make sure South Dakota’s stories are understood by all who visit. The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation will be key to supporting the museum’s aspirations, and we appreciate their continued partnership on this major effort.

As the contractor has not yet been hired, the timeline of when this work will begin is not yet set. I expect the work to begin in late summer and that the center will be undergoing the renovation in phases for the next two years. More to come on this issue and we’ll spread the word to keep you informed.

These are exciting times for South Dakota’s history. We have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to not only improve our building for its public use, and staff, but also to make sure the museum explains our history to our future visitors.

Open, Treasurer — Karen Layher, and Board Members — Nancy Anderson, Rosie Christianson, Gloria Cooley, Connie Larson, Marsha Lundberg, Daryl Stengel and Tammy Wollschlager.

#####

The 54th annual Dakota Conference on the Northern Plains, a humanities and public affairs program of the Center for Western Studies at Augustana University in Sioux Falls, takes place April 28-29. The theme is “Radio Comes to the Northern Plains: From Wireless to Wi-Fi (1922-2022).” According to the South Dakota Broadcasters Association, radio began in South Dakota as early as 1912 in Eureka, but the flowering of licensed radio stations in the state, and throughout the Northern Plains, started in 1922. The early-registration deadline for the conference is April 19. For more information, call 605-274-4007 or email dakotaconference@augie.edu.

#####

The West River History Conference elected new officers at a board retreat in January in Spearfish. Laura Hovey Neubert of Rapid City is the new executive director for the conference. Noted South Dakota historian Paul Higbee of Spearfish was elected president, and Tim Velder of Sundance, WY, is the vice-president. Bonita Ley of Keystone is the secretary. Talli Nauman of Whitewood and Julie Stoll of Piedmont are new at-large board members. Other board members include Peg Aplan of Tilford, Richard Carlson of Deadwood, Dillon Haug of Spearfish, Karen Holzer of Spearfish, Jean Kessloff of Rapid City, Donovan Sprague of Rapid City/Sheridan, David Super of Sturgis and Joselyn Vifquain of Spearfish. This year’s 30th annual conference is Oct. 6-8. For more information visit westriverhistoryconference.org.

#####

The annual Midsummer Celebration of the Dalesburg Scandinavian Association of Vermillion will be held Friday, June 24. The band “Jaerv”

from Gothenburg, Sweden, will be performing. For more information visit dalesburg.org.

#####

The History Club of the Codrington County Historical Society meets the third Thursday of each month at 3:30 p.m. in the basement of the Codrington County Heritage Museum in Watertown. The April 21 title is “The Orphan Trains” — Learn more about the program of sending homeless children west and its ties to South Dakota. On May 19 it’s “Timelines” — Come play a game where you will put historical events, including those in Codrington County, in order. The June 16 theme is “Germans from Russia” — Learn factors that convinced Germans to move to Russia and then again to the United States. For more information visit CCHSMuseum.org.

#####

Progress is being made on the HO Scale Dakota Junction model railroad at the South Dakota State Railroad Museum in Hill City. Volunteers Phil Pearson, Bernie Walker and Bob Bye are assembling new supports to raise the level of the 360 square-foot display for better visibility, operations and exhibit spacing. The museum will re-open to the public on May 7 — National Train Day.

#####

You can still register for the annual SD History Conference of the South Dakota State Historical Society, being held April 21-23 in Pierre. If you represent your SDSHS-member organization, you qualify for the member rate. The theme this year is “Fighting the Good War: South Dakotans in World War II.” The event is being organized by the Research & Publishing Office. To register, visit history.sd.gov, or for more information call 605-773-6000.