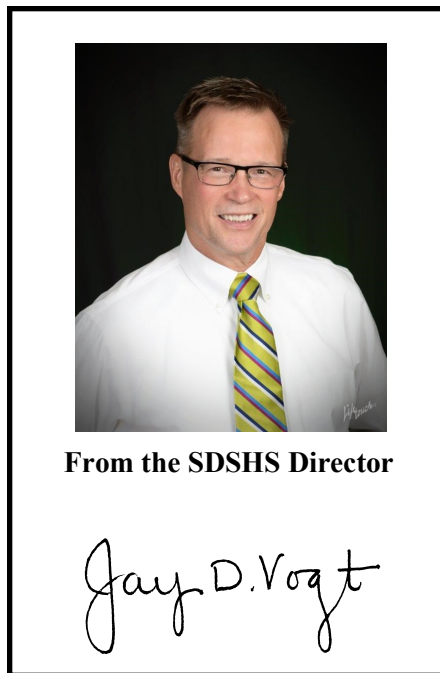


History Relevance campaign gives 7 reasons why History is essential

The History Relevance campaign started in 2012 with a series of informal conversations about the value of history. In part, the discussion concerned getting the attention of policy-makers and appropriators to provide funding that enables historical societies and history agencies to collect, preserve, interpret, and promote our history. The conversations also addressed the teaching of history, not just in the classroom, but in public institutions, such as historic sites and museums. Over the next couple of years, the informal meetings became more organized, resulting in a steering committee and statement on the value of history. The steering committee consists of representatives from the nation's pre-eminent history organizations. The three state historical societies on the committee—Idaho, Minnesota, and Nebraska—are all from the heartland. Visit the website <https://www.historyrelevance.com/> to learn more. The South Dakota State Historical Society is one of the endorsers of the statement, and your organization can do so, also.

According to the statement, "History Relevance promotes a shared language, tools, and strategies to mobilize history organizations in the United States around the relevance and value of history. We support history organizations that encourage the public to use historical thinking skills to actively engage with and address contemporary issues and to value history for its relevance to modern life."

The seven ways history is essential are, To Ourselves: 1. Identity and 2. Critical Thinking; To Our Communities: 3. Vibrant Communities and 4.



Economic Development; and To Our Future: 5. Engage Citizens, 6. Leadership, and 7. Legacy. I am borrowing liberally from the History Relevance—The Value of History Statement below.

Identify: History nurtures personal and collective identity in a diverse world. Critical Thinking: History teaches vital skills and requires critical approaches to interpret and communicate complex ideas clearly and coherently. Vibrant Communities: History is the foundation for strong, vibrant communities when wrapped in human memory. Economic Development: History is a catalyst for economic growth. Engaged Citizens: History helps people envision a better future. Democracy thrives when individuals convene to express opinions,

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Field Reports

O'Leary new director of HHOH in Lead

Patrick O'Leary is the new executive director of the Historic Homestake Opera House in Lead. O'Leary replaces Sarah Carlson, who is pursuing other professional interests.



During his career O'Leary worked with New York's Department of Cultural Affairs. Later working on Broadway, he stage-managed the original "Annie," produced by Mike Nichols, "Sweeney Todd," directed by Hal Prince, and "Blood Brothers," starring Carol King. O'Leary co-produced two successful Off-Broadway productions with his company. As director of the tour department for Columbia Artists Management, he managed tours of the world's leading orchestras and dance companies, including the Vienna Philharmonic, The London Symphony, The Berlin Ballet, and Twyla Tharp and Mikhail Baryshnikov. O'Leary went on to become the director of the Theatre Development Fund travel program. O'Leary returned to South Dakota in 2006 to work with Black Hills Community Theatre in creating a space for performing arts organizations in Rapid City. O'Leary also served as an adjunct professor at BHSU's Rapid City campus, where he taught courses in acting and theater.

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Brookings County Museum increases technology

The Brookings County Museum in Volga now has the computer technology enabling users to zip around local history at the speed of light.

Thanks to the technical and financial support of Brookings businesspersons Al Rogers and Ginger Thomson, the Brookings County Museum has launched its comprehensive website and touch-screen TV kiosk.

The combination greatly expands the museum's educational outreach, displaying photos and information to viewers around the world. Users at computers or while visiting the museum campus in Volga can view pictures of the museum's many displays, read stories about county history and history makers, meet museum directors, or watch vignettes of horses being harnessed or at work plowing, yarn being spun, among other educational enactments.

Also included is the detailed work of retired Brookings Boeing Company software engineer Doug Olesen's evolution, time-lapse maps of the South Dakota State University campus and the City of Brookings. More similar maps of area entities will be added later.

The website address is brookingscountymuseum.org.

Thomson, owner of Website Spice in Brookings, created the program-



Ginger Thompson, Phil Wagner and Al Rogers, from left, stand behind the museum's new touch-screen television set. (Photo courtesy Brookings County Museum)

ming to allow all this to happen.

Rogers assisted the museum in working through the technical aspects of the undertaking and provided the touch-screen television set, according to Phil Wagner, museum

president.

He said Rogers teamed with museum board member Chuck Cecil in determining needs and areas of visitor interest.

The system was launched Jan. 1, 2020. The Brookings County museum joins a handful of county and city museums in South Dakota that have this exciting new capability, Wagner said.

Cecil agreed. "I think our county's museum will have by far the most comprehensive website of any," he said. "This is a huge step forward into what museums of the future will include." He said the website will eventually include the capability of receiving donations to the museum through electronic transfer.

Rogers is the former co-owner of Central Business Supply. Thomson has extensive on-air radio and television experience. She also teaches mass communication at SDSU and oversees her website business.

"Costs to the museum for this exciting new venture have been minimal, thanks to Thomson and Rogers," Cecil said.

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listen to others, and take action. Leadership: History inspires leaders. History provides today's leaders with role models as they navigate through the complexities of modern life. Legacy: History, saved and preserved, is the foundation for future generations. Historical knowledge is crucial to protecting democracy and a foundation on which to build and know what it means to be a member of the civic community.

I encourage you to visit the website <https://www.historyrelevance.com/> to learn more about the History Relevance campaign and for your organization to consider endorsing the statement. Please feel free to share and discuss it with everyone who should understand and appreciate the value of history. Thank you. jdV

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The South Dakota State Railroad Museum, Ltd. (SDSRM) in Hill City announces the election of five new members to the museum's board of directors at the organization's annual meeting in January.

Joining the board are Alex Huff of Oacoma/Chamberlain, John Van Bogart of Hill City, Wayne Kerslake of Sioux Falls, and Phil Pearson and Jerry Wright of Rapid City.

Members currently serving on the board are Lesta Turchen, Mikal Lewis, and Curtis Tyler of Hill City, with Jack Stengel and Tom Dains of Sioux Falls. Dorothy Fuller (Newcastle, Wyoming), former board member/secretary, is not running for re-election.

"As we move into the museum's second decade, this group provides the SDSRM with a remarkable background of education, business, history, railroading, military, financial, insurance, and public service experience, said Rick Mills, historian/curator of the museum.

The museum will re-open to the

public with a special 10th anniversary ribbon cutting and program on Friday, May 1. More details will be released in the coming months, and on the museum's web site at www.sdsrm.org

Longtime Sioux Falls businessman, community leader and public speaker Jim Woster will be the keynote speaker at the Annual Meeting of the Minnehaha County Historical Society on April 16 at the Old Courthouse Museum in Sioux Falls. The theme is "Looking Back, Looking Forward." The evening begins with a social hour at 5:30, followed by dinner, catered by Chef Dominique's, at 6. The cost is \$20 a person.

Make plans now to attend the annual History Conference of the South Dakota State Historical Society on April 24-25 in Pierre. For more information please visit: history.sd.gov