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## Jones becomes new director of SD State Historical Society

Greetings to all and Happy Holidays!

I'm Ben Jones, and as of the 9<sup>th</sup> of December, I am the new State Historian and Director of the South Dakota State Historical Society. I replaced Jay D. Vogt and was part of the many who wished him well at his retirement on Dec. 8. He had a long and distinguished career at the Society. Not only as the Director, but as SHPO, and leading the group through the various changes its been through since 1987. As you may know, Nancy Koupal and Jeanne Ode, both in Research and Publishing, have also retired and so I and Dedra McDonald Birzer, who now leads Research and Publishing, and Ted Spencer, who now has been appointed as SHPO, have begun to pick up where they left off, a bit daunted by all they accomplished but looking forward to the future.

By way of introductions, I grew up in Sioux Falls and De Smet and earned a History degree from South Dakota State University in 1989. Air Force ROTC provided me a scholarship and a commission, and I served over 23 years in logistics, strategic planning positions, and as a history faculty member at the Air Force Academy. I was stationed in Guam, Europe, the Midwest, Colorado, and twice in Afghanistan. Along the way I earned my MA in History from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and my PhD in History from the University of Kansas. I retired from the USAF in 2013 and became the Dean of Arts and Sciences at Dakota State University. In January of 2019, Governor Noem appointed me to be Secretary of Education and I served in that role until taking this



position on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December. My wife Suzy is from Yankton and we have three children. The oldest is a University of Kansas sophomore and the other two attend Sioux Falls Christian High School.

As you can see, I've moved around quite a bit, since leaving South Dakota in 1989. But when the chance came to return, my wife and I took it and we greatly enjoy being home again. I've learned along the way that by comparison, South Dakota has many attributes and a unique and important history. It's a history I plan to share with many from inside and outside of the state. Understanding our state's history is a team effort and I look forward to working

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## Field Reports

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Minnehaha County Historical Society's monthly History Talks have gone online via YouTube LIVE.

The December History Talk, with South Dakota Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Will Prines, was held Dec. 17. Prines shared his memories and music of his band Choozy Music and the infamous Sioux Falls night spot – the Pomp Room.

For more information visit the MCHS website and Facebook page.

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On Dec. 19, the Homestake Opera House in Lead hosted Flower and Flame performing Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." Flower and Flame is a group of four principal musicians with the South Dakota Symphony and one actor. They've been evolving since forming in 2002, and their production of "A Christmas Carol" has a unique twist. It's a mix of music and narration and has become a favorite among theatergoers in recent years.

As the final production of the year 2020 at the Homestake Opera House, what could be more appropriate than "A Christmas Carol," the age-old Christmas story from Charles Dickens.

With the holiday season here, people are ready to celebrate, and Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" is just what the doctor ordered. The story of

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## More Field Reports

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Ebenezer Scrooge and his hard heart has endured through time since December 1843. That's when "A Christmas Carol" was first published. It has been acted out year after year on stage and on screen.

For more information about the Homestake Opera House call 605-584-2067 or visit [Homestakeoperahouse.org](http://Homestakeoperahouse.org).

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A new exhibit, "Where the Wild Things Grow in South Dakota," opened Dec. 12, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. It looks at a few of the many South Dakota native plants used for food, medicine, and meeting spiritual needs.

There is now free admission to the museum for all South Dakota residents. Out-of-state adult visitors pay an \$8 admission fee or \$6 for out-of-state seniors 60-and-older. The museum is open from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. CST Monday through Saturday, and 1-4:30 p.m.

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## Jones

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with all of you in this.

A boost to this effort was provided in the Governor's budget request for FY 2022. She is requesting that the legislature approve an appropriation of \$900,000 to support instructional materials in South Dakota history for K-12 educators and students. This coming summer, the Department of Education will revise the K-12 Social Studies Standards and, if the funding is approved, we will then begin to develop instructional materials to support the new standards.

I hope that in this, or many other efforts, we can work together to collect, preserve, interpret and promote our state's great history.



**This 1918 Keystone Steam Roller, in its original condition, is one of the featured items now on display at the Mead Cultural Education Center in Yankton. (Courtesy photo)**

## Yankton museum exhibit features toys

The Paul & Carol Goettch Toy Collection at the Mead Cultural Education Center in Yankton features 90 toys from 1902-2009 with a majority of the pieces dated around 1950.

Paul Goettch, who is originally from Holstein, Iowa, has been collecting toys for many years. Some of the toys on display, like his 1949

Farmall M tractor, are ones he received as a child. There is a small collection of "hands-on" toys that visitors can play with in the exhibit.

Hand sanitizer stations are available. The Paul & Carol Goettch Toy Collection will be on exhibit through April 1, 2021.

## Historic Preservation grant apps available

The South Dakota State Historical Society announces that the applications for the first round of the 2021 Deadwood Fund grant program are due on Feb. 1, 2021, for work beginning no earlier than May 1, 2021.

Grant forms are available online at <https://history.sd.gov/preservation/fundingopportunities.aspx>.

The program is designed to encourage restoration or rehabilitation of historic properties by individuals, organizations, or public agencies, according to Ben Jones, director of the State Historical Society, whose historic preservation office administers the program.

Grants will be awarded in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000. The grant amount must be matched at least on a dollar-for-dollar basis from nonfederal and

nonstate sources. Nonprofit organizations will be allowed to use in-kind services for one-half of their match.

In 2019, \$120,676 was awarded among nine projects, which had matching funds of \$327,812. The resulting total public-private investment was \$448,448.

Funding for the program is from Deadwood gaming revenue earmarked by state law for historic preservation projects throughout the state and distributed by the State Historical Society.

For more information on the Deadwood Fund grant program, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at the Cultural Heritage Center, 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2217; telephone 605-773-3458; email [shpo@state.sd.us](mailto:shpo@state.sd.us).