

Administration
Report for the 8 December Trustees Meeting

1. Share your voice: This fall David, Catherine, and I have met with the public in order to hear from people about our museum exhibit concepts. We ask them, what makes South Dakota, South Dakota from your part of the state? What do they connect with regarding our design concepts and raises concerns? Lastly, we ask them about an museum experience that impacted them. These comments will be aggregated by locality and statewide to provide some feedback to the Museum staff and Split Rock about the design work thus far. By the time of the meeting on the 8th we will have met with people in Timber Lake, De Smet, Pierre, Rapid City, Watertown, Yankton, Sioux Falls, Hot Springs, Deadwood, and the Indian Education Summit in Huron. People may also provide feedback on the website. We have future events scheduled in Chamberlain, Brookings, and Aberdeen. One on Rosebud is in the works.

2. Artificial Intelligence: We are taking advantage of opportunities to learn more about this technology and its impact on the work of the SDSHS. The Department of Education collaborated with Dakota State, the University of South Dakota, and the School Administrators of South Dakota to put on information sessions about AI. I was able to attend the one in Chamberlain. It was very informative but geared toward teachers, which was very fitting. Niche uses of this technology will prove very productive, I'm sure. But its broader impact on history is something we'll be watching. We do hope to highlight AI in regards to our work at the coming conference this spring. The theme is Y2K and a retrospective on the sentiments of the coming millennial transition on computers and society. The Banquet's quest speaker will be Jason Steinhauer who has written on how technology is changing how history is understood. Certainly, more to come in the future but this technology will change how history is crafted and understood. I'd invite your thoughts on this issue as well.

3. Wounded Knee article: the Press staff asked me to fill in and provide an article on Wounded Knee for Volume 53 of the Journal due to a late drop of their planned author. At first, I thought I would provide a brief over view of the scholarship of the 1973 event. But I noticed that little historical work was out there that provided the point of view of the hostages or used the Nixon Whitehouse audio tape and oral histories even though they've been widely available for over a decade. I was fortunate to find the last living hostage who agreed to be interviewed to tell her side of the story. The Nixon tapes reveal how the President was so distracted by other things and how that impacted the federal response. In any event, it was rewarding to publish the piece and I hope members enjoy the issue. Slater and Dedra are to be commended for all the effort this special issue took.

4. Strategic Goal: Building our Audiences: One of the challenges of any state organization is

that, “Pierre is,” as the old joke goes, “not only centrally located but centrally isolated.” In an effort to get past this, we’ve been doing public service announcements, the podcast, the History Talks, the eNewsletter, the State Fair, and various presentations around the state. We also have a great partner with SDPB that promotes and distributes much of our content. The PSA’s take little time, are free, and are widely played on the state’s commercial radio stations. The podcast gets approximately four to five hundred unique listens per episode and the audience is statewide and national. The point of the push is to be on people’s mind even though we’re under renovation. The Share Your Voice effort is also helping in this and its proven to be a great way to check in with members around the state. I can see some kind of public sessions being held around the state in the future. Along these lines we are going to consolidate our social media accounts in the coming weeks. We have a devoted following, but it’s scattered and difficult for the general public to understand we’re all one organization. On your personal social media and in conversations with your friends please continue to share about the Historical Society and the different ways we can support their learning of our state’s history.

5. The Mount Rushmore Society/The Mount Rushmore National Memorial: The Mount Rushmore Society recently raised funds to update the current films used at the Memorial visitor center. I was invited appear on the film, along with David Wolff, and Gutzon Borglum’s granddaughter. I was able to provide some historical context to the beginning of the memorial’s creation and the life and work of Doane Robinson. I assume they will have others also in the films and web products they’re making. The National Park Service will own the copywrite. The current film has been in use since 1985. The film company paid me an honorarium which I donated to the Foundation for the museum exhibit fund. The films are expected to be released in 2025.

6. The Legislative Reception: This year’s Legislative Reception will be Thursday, January 11th, at 4pm at the Capitol Lake Visitor Center. The theme is “Party like it’s 99” as the Legislature is holding the 99th Session. I’m told they would like to mark their centennial in some way next year and we look forward to working with the Legislature on having some kind of history event or events during the 100th Session in 2024. This theme also mirrors the Y2K theme of our Annual Conference.