



To: South Dakota State Historical Society Board of Trustees  
South Dakota Historical Society Foundation Board  
From: Catherine Forsch, CEO  
South Dakota Historical Society Foundation  
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Subject: Foundation Board Updates  
Date: February 27, 2026

### **Foundation Board Updates**

Executive Committee - to serve a 1-year term

Karly Winter, President (Aberdeen)  
Val Simpson, Vice President (Rapid City)  
Marcus Mahlen, Secretary (Sioux Falls)  
Bill Peterson, Treasurer (Sioux Falls)

New board members to serve a 3-year term

David E. Gilbertson (Brookings)  
Reed Holwegner (Hermosa)  
Scott Neu (Pierre)

Foundation Board

Laura Armstrong (Rapid City)  
Dew Bad Warrior-Ganje (Rapid City)  
Julie Breu (Wentworth)  
Casey Derflinger (Spearfish)  
Bob Foley (Tyndall)  
Eric Jennings (Spearfish)  
Marcus Mahlen (Sioux Falls)  
Patricia Miller (Rapid City)  
Nathan Sanderson (Pierre)  
Charles Schroyer (Pierre)  
Tony Venhuizen

*ex-officio*

Catherine K. Forsch (Sioux Falls)  
Benjamin F. Jones (Sioux Falls)

### **Capital Campaign**

We are in the midst of a capital campaign to completely reimagine the museum and have raised nearly half of our goal. With exhibit design now underway, we have a short and critical window to secure the remaining funds needed to keep the project on schedule and see it come to fruition.

The museum will reopen in phases, with three exhibits opening in July 2026 and the remaining galleries completed by December. This timeline allows visitors to experience the new museum during the nation's 250th anniversary celebrations while final work continues.

We are partnering with Split Rock Studios on exhibit design, with costs billed monthly as the work progresses.

While we have been approved for a line of credit to keep the project moving, our goal is to minimize its use so that philanthropic dollars are directed toward exhibits rather than financing costs. To that end, we are seeking leadership support to help fund specific months of design work or to sponsor individual exhibits. This once-in-a-generation project will significantly expand how students and the public engage with South Dakota's history and offers a meaningful legacy opportunity for those who value our story. To learn more, please call Catherine Forsch at 605-222-8354 or reach out to board leadership for information.

### **Support the 2026 History Conference – June 1-3 in Pierre**

We're seeking financial support to help make this year's History Conference a success! If you know of an individual, business, or organization that might be interested in sponsoring the Governor's History Awards & \$2500 (2), a session (\$1,500) or a break (\$500), please contact Catherine Forsch. Session sponsors will have the opportunity to introduce the speaker at their sponsored session—don't worry, we'll provide a script to make it easy. Your support helps us celebrate South Dakota's rich history and ensures a memorable experience for all attendees.

**Spring fundraising campaign** - If you find yourself in the fortunate position of being able to make a charitable gift this spring, please consider a gift to help preserve South Dakota's history. Your gift can be designated to the capital campaign, a specific project, or to where the need is the greatest. You can return your gift in the appeal that will be mailed this spring, or you can go online to contribute. [www.sdhsf.org/donate](http://www.sdhsf.org/donate)

### **Please consider a gift to help support these important projects:**

- “George Washington” by Gary Gregg (Faces of Mount Rushmore SD Biography Series)
- “150 years of Commemorating the Battle of the Little Bighorn” by Sandy Barnard
- “Kylie and the Very Old Cat” by Linda Marshall (children's picture book, true story about Badlands fossil find by an 8-year-old girl)
- “Dust, Drought, and Creativity: North Dakota Folk Art in the 1930s” by Susan Wefald.
- “General William Beadle” (graphic style biography) - written by Justin Blessinger, illustrated by Hector Curriel
- “Following the Footsteps of Laura Ingalls Wilder” by Nancy Tystad Koupal (final volume of Pioneer Girl Project)
- “Buffalo Bill” by Bob Madison (South Dakota Biography Series)
- “Halháta and Ptéňčaka – Magpie and Bison” (Lakota language version board book)
- David Wolff's Black Hills History Tours (volume 4 & volume 5)

### **Adopt a collection in the State Archives**

Please help us to identify prospects to adopt a digital collection in the State Archives.

By adopting a collection, you will preserve South Dakota's stories told through local photographs and documents. For more information go to [www.sdhsf.org/donate/special\\_projects/saving-sd-digital-collections.html](http://www.sdhsf.org/donate/special_projects/saving-sd-digital-collections.html) or call Chelle Somsen/Catherine Forsch.

**Heritage Stores.** Don't forget to purchase your South Dakota gifts from the Heritage stores run by the Foundation. As a State Historical Society member, you receive a 10% discount on store purchases. Call Juli if you need assistance placing your order. 605-773-6001.

[www.sdhsf.org/store/shopnow.html](http://www.sdhsf.org/store/shopnow.html)

### **Upcoming Events**

***History Talks* 7pm CT / 6pm MT**

**Register at [www.sdhsf.org/events](http://www.sdhsf.org/events)**

### **March 10 – History Talks with Joseph Bottum**

“This Far Country” - Reaching back to 1776, author Joseph Bottum connects the ideas and convictions that shaped the Declaration of Independence to the wide plains “where liberty found a place,” illuminating how the nation’s founding currents flowed west to shape South Dakota. You can preorder “This Far Country” at [The Heritage Store](http://TheHeritageStore.com) [www.sdhsf.org](http://www.sdhsf.org)

**April 14 – History Talks America 250 panel discussion** outlining special commemorative events happening around the state.

**May 12 – History Talks with Kristin Dutcher Mann,** Replica Liberty Bells and the 1950 Independence Bond Drive