

**South Dakota Bids Farewell to Popular Smithsonian Barn Exhibition at State Fair in Huron**  
**"Barn Again! Celebrating an American Icon" Finishes Yearlong Tour**

South Dakotans are preparing to say goodbye to "Barn Again! Celebrating an American Icon," the Smithsonian traveling exhibition that has visited nine communities in the state since September 2000. Its final host, the South Dakota State Fair in Huron, will open the exhibition to the public on July 30 and run it through Aug. 5 in the Expo Building. A special recognition event will be held at the Fair on Saturday, Aug. 4 to celebrate the success of the tour and thank the communities, sponsors and congressional representatives for their support of "Barn Again!" in South Dakota. Besides Huron, the communities in South Dakota chosen to host "Barn Again!" were Freeman, Kimball, Spearfish, Dell Rapids, Sisseton and Bowdle. State museums in Brookings and Pierre featured the exhibition in December and January.

"This project has provided an opportunity for many in South Dakota, and throughout the nation, to recognize the amazing breadth of history stored in our backyards," said Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD). "I encourage those South Dakotans who have not seen the tour to do so before the end of this year's State Fair. I commend the Smithsonian and the numerous local organizations, such as the South Dakota Humanities Council, for bringing this wonderful project to life."

Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) remarked, "One of the mainstays of rural architecture has always been the barn. The style of a barn can tell a great deal about the heritage of a region, and 'Barn Again' is an excellent, thorough examination of the lasting impact these simple, majestic structures have made in rural America, and throughout the country. I am very pleased that this wonderful exhibit has explored the heritage of rural America from this unique perspective and encourage South Dakotans attending the State Fair to take the time to review this important exhibit."

"Along every back road, you'll find a barn, silhouetted and watching out over the sunset on South Dakota's prairies. I'm pleased so many residents could explore these images and the histories behind the barns that dot our agricultural landscape. The 'Barn Again!' traveling exhibit provides a chance to learn more about our past and helps us to recognize that our heritage is still alive in our surroundings," noted Representative John Thune (R-SD).

Exploring the use and meaning of barns in all segments of American life, from their agricultural forms to their use in advertising, "Barn Again!" is part of Museum on Main Street, a series of exhibitions and programs specially designed to serve museums, libraries and historical societies in rural communities. This unique partnership, established in 1991, brings together the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), the Federation of State Humanities

Councils, individual state humanities councils, and small rural museums in a collaborative effort to serve audiences of approximately 10,000 or fewer. In addition to South Dakota, rural communities in Delaware and Washington were also chosen to host “Barn Again!” between Sept. 2000 and Aug. 2001.

It is estimated that approximately 12,457 South Dakotans viewed the exhibition over the course of the past year.

### **The Exhibition**

“Barn Again!” gives visitors new ways to consider a familiar icon. The exhibition surveys the agricultural changes that led to architectural adaptations on the farm, following major movements in American history such as 19th-century European immigration and Westward migration. Although industrial farming in the 20th-century has rendered many traditional barns obsolete because they cannot accommodate the enormous machinery and harvests of today's large-scale farms, the exhibition points out that their iconic role in American culture remains constant. Advertising and industry professionals, politicians and artists frequently use barn imagery to convey American values such as dependability, hard work, independence and traditionalism.

As part of the unique collaborations “Barn Again!” promotes, the South Dakota Humanities Council (SDHC) worked with SITES and the individual museums on the state tour to present complementary public programming in each community. For example, many of the communities took advantage of a Readers' Theatre called “The Barn,” written especially for the exhibition. A cast of seven, with the help of the writer/director, created a production that uses a barn to narrate the story of several generations of a homestead family on the South Dakota prairie. The family records its history on a beam of the barn, including the effects of the two World Wars, the flu epidemic of 1918, and the Wall Street crash. The barn weathers all of these events, but finally collapses in a storm. In the end, part of the barn is saved and turned into an art studio. Although each community performed the same play, interpretations varied, and each created something entirely its own.

“Barn Again!” inspired some communities to explore their area barns. Spearfish organized shuttle bus tours every Saturday and Sunday to five barns in the northern Black Hills. The tours went to a mid-1800s pole barn, a courtyard barn used as a stagecoach stop, a stone Danish dairy barn, a post-and-beam barn built in the late 1800s, and a traditional modern ranch barn.

“Barn Again!” is organized by SITES and the National Building Museum, with assistance from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and in association with the Federation of State Humanities Councils and the SDHC, “Barn Again!” is a registered trademark owned by the Meredith Corporation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

This project has been made possible through the generous support of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and The Hearst Foundation. Additional funding has been provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Smithsonian Institution Special Exhibition Fund, and the Smithsonian Educational Outreach Fund.

### **A Lasting Partnership**

SDHC and SITES are pleased to announce that they are currently working together to bring a second Museum on Main Street exhibition, titled "Yesterday's Tomorrows: Past Visions of the American Future," to South Dakota beginning in March 2002. The exhibition will visit the communities of Madison, Chamberlain, Belle Fourche, Hill City, Deadwood and Redfield. The tour will conclude in Pierre at the Cultural Heritage Center, the state's museum, in Dec. 2002.

SDHC's mission is to encourage South Dakota citizens to ask central human questions that define their past, present and future; to establish forums to liberate thinking and cultivate sound judgment on both timely and timeless issues of human living; and to explore the heritage, values and collective hopes that thrive throughout South Dakota.

Each year, SITES shares the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside of Washington, D.C. One of the Smithsonian's four National Programs, SITES makes available a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history, which are shown not only in museums but also wherever people live, work, and play: in libraries, science centers, historical societies, community centers, botanical gardens, schools, and shopping malls. In 2002, SITES will celebrate 50 years of connecting Americans to their shared cultural heritage. Exhibition descriptions and tour schedules are available at [www.si.edu/sites](http://www.si.edu/sites).

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