

Press Release –

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SMITHSONIAN EXHIBITION EXPLORES BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE

Do “good fences make good neighbors?” Why? The Pioneer Museum of McKenzie County, in cooperation with the North Dakota Humanities Council, will explore this and other aspects of the cultural history of fences and land use as it hosts the local showing of *Between Fences*, a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition. *Between Fences* will be on view beginning March 14th and continuing through April 25th, 2008.

The Pioneer Museum of McKenzie County and the surrounding community has been expressly chosen by the North Dakota Humanities Council to host *Between Fences* as part of the Museum on Main Street project – a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. The exhibition will tour six communities in North Dakota from October 12th, 2007 to August 1st, 2008.

Through selection of artifacts, photographs and illustrations, *Between Fences* will surprise audiences with its exploration of the multiple meanings behind this everyday icon. Whether made of split rails, decorative white pickets, or tall chain link, a fence conveys information about the people who built it, how they view and use their property, and the nature of their relationships with their neighbors. Such barriers speak eloquently about how we view our communities and country as well. *Between Fences* explores the implications of fences in Colonial America, around gated communities, and at our country’s borders with Canada and Mexico.

“We are very pleased to be able to bring *Between Fences* to our area” said Jan Dodge, *Between Fences* Project Director and McKenzie County Tourism Director. “It allows us the opportunity to explore this fascinating aspect of our own region’s history and we hope that it will inspire many to become even more involved in the cultural life of our community.”

“Allowing *all* of our state’s residents to have access to the cultural resources of our nation’s premiere museum is a priority of the North Dakota State Humanities”, said Janet Daley Jury, ND Humanities State Executive Director. “With this special tour, we are pleased to be working with the Pioneer Museum of McKenzie County and the Watford City area to develop local exhibitions and public programs that compliment the Smithsonian exhibition.” Such free events include projects of visual art; “How Do We Build Our Fences” by the Watford City High School art students and a Picket Fence of ND History by the 4th grade Watford City Elementary students; presentations to students by Dr. Barbara Handy-Marchello, ND Humanities State Scholar (Jan. 14th); a presentation by Dr. John Helgeland (March 10th) entitled *Fences, Faith and Fear*; a fence quilting challenge by the Prairie Rose Quilters – on display at museum; a barbed wire display; and a Native American gardening fence and history.

Between Fences is part of Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils across the nation, and the local host institutions. To learn more about *Between Fences* and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit www.museumonmainstreet.org.

Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress. Local support to the Pioneer Museum with this endeavor has been provided by the Stenehjem Family Foundation and the City of Watford City and the North Dakota Humanities Council, a nonprofit, independent state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

SITES connect millions of Americans with their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of art, science and history exhibitions. State humanities councils, located in each state and US territory, support community-based humanities programs that highlight such topics as local history, literature and cultural traditions. The Pioneer Museum of McKenzie County serves the local community by preservation of articles and records that relate the story of how the pioneers lived and labored in McKenzie County, North Dakota. To learn more, visit www.sites.si.edu, www.nd-humanities.org, and www.4eyes.net. Pioneer Museum of McKenzie County; Long X Trading Post, 100 2nd Ave SW, Watford City, ND 58854; Mon-Fri 10am-6pm. Contact- Jan Dodge, 701-444-5804; jdodge@co.mckenzie.nd.us

