



News

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Vacationers can plan a “staycation” with SDSU campus sites

BROOKINGS, S.D. — As gas prices continue to rise, so do the number of people looking for vacations close to home.

A CNN-dubbed “staycation” offers alternatives for those who want to relax and enjoy a summer holiday without the stress of planning, packing and travel expenses.

South Dakota State University campus attractions make staycations easy and memorable.

The South Dakota Art Museum, at the intersection of Medary Avenue and Harvey Dunn Street, can begin a family adventure fine-tuning observational skills.

The cool interior of the art museum unfolds a labyrinth of unique, world-renowned art — some local, some regional and an eclectic mix of both.

Lynn Verschoor, the art museum director, said everyone can take away something from the variety of exhibits rooted in South Dakota.

“There is a lot to learn about the people of South Dakota through their art and how South Dakota looks through their eyes,” she observed.

Verschoor spoke of all the exhibitions with equal enthusiasm, but a note of greater excitement snuck into her voice when she described two new Harvey Dunn paintings recently added to the museum’s collection.

“We are very fortunate to receive this wonderful new painting of Dunn’s mother Bersha as a gift from Deborah Wessells, Dunn’s granddaughter.

“We are also thankful to the Ella Ollenberg estate for the opportunity to purchase a powerful WWI painting from the Red Cross,” concluded Verschoor.

A continuing exhibition of work by South Dakota artists features oil painter Dorothy Morgan’s landscapes of the Brookings area. Morgan’s work has gained national reputation through 20 years exhibiting in a San Francisco gallery.

The museum has an extensive collection of Native American photographs and tribal art, a display on the people behind the creation of internationally sold Marghab Linens and the traveling Governor's biennial art exhibition featuring contemporary South Dakota artists.

Verschoor said thorough information about the exhibitions is provided free for visitors, and group tours are available at no charge.

A museum store contains merchandise matching the diverse collections ranging from locally made jewelry and pottery to international wares of Indonesian masks and African sculpture.

After observing bright or subdued paintings, pottery or needlework, visitors can move north a block to the SDSU Dairy Bar.

The Dairy Bar produces famous SDSU ice cream, milk, cheese and butter made with milk and cream from SDSU dairy cows.

One of the only student-run dairy processing facilities in the nation, the Dairy Bar started in 1927 to keep the dairy-processing center not only educational, but also self-sustaining.

Today they produce over 60 flavors of ice cream, with 16 choices always on hand to buy cones or dishes for eating there or containers to take home.

Anne Owens, manager of the Dairy Bar, said eating ice cream can also be educational with a tour of the processing facility that can be arranged through an advanced phone call.

"We encourage people to learn about the technical process that goes into making ice cream and dairy that is part of the everyday diet," she added.

The Agricultural Heritage Museum across the street west offers a plethora of history about farm life across South Dakota.

Museum exhibitions examine human experiences, institutions and cultures that were shaped by the state's rural landscape and diverse environment.

Stepping into the Ag museum is like stepping back in time, complete with an immaculately restored 1915 J. I. Case Steam Traction engine, one of three top restorations in the country.

A current exhibition of vintage aprons in every color, pattern and style from 1930 through 1990 dangle on would-be clotheslines that span a section of the 1918 Stock Pavilion.

Seven restored tractors, a collection of South Dakota inventions, a homestead claim shack and a 1915 farmhouse are some of the permanent exhibits at the Ag Heritage Museum that strike visitor memories and stories.

With advanced notice, the public can also access some of the 40,000 archived photographs collected by the museum.

"There are all levels of opportunity to learn," said Mac Harris, Ag Museum director.

"People can just browse through, have a tour or dig around to find information about family history in the area," he concluded.

The museum also organizes programs to enhance exhibits with book signings and workshops. The annual Brookings Radio Grill-Out will be at the museum July 17.

Tucked in the corner of the museum, a quaint little shop offers a variety of merchandise and books on South Dakota, its regional agriculture history and influence on community life.

For more information and hours of operation for an SDSU Staycation, go online to www.sdstate.edu and under the Shopping Mall link find:

Agriculture Heritage Museum
South Dakota Art Museum
Dairy Bar
University Bookstore

Information about other interesting sights around campus can be found by searching www.sdstate.edu by their title or subject.

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Photo 1 – SAM exterior: The South Dakota Art Museum offers a wealth of visual vacation for visitors.

Photo 2 - SD Ag Heritage Museum: Exhibitions describing agricultural life in South Dakota strike memories and stories for visitors. (not shown)

