

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Contact: Chris Schuelke
Otter Tail County Historical Society
PH 218-736-6038
cschuelke@otchs.org

State Contact: Casey DeMarais
Minnesota Humanities Center
PH 651-772-4278
casey@minnesotahumanities.com

Smithsonian Contact: Jennifer Schommer
PH 202-633-4121
schommerj@si.edu

SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT EXPLORES BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE
Exciting exhibit makes its way to Fergus Falls

FERGUS FALLS, Minn. – February 4, 2010, – Do good fences make good neighbors? The Otter Tail County Historical Society, in cooperation with the Minnesota Humanities Center, will explore this and other aspects of the cultural history of fences and land use as it hosts the local showing of the Smithsonian Institution’s traveling exhibit, *Between Fences*, February 6 through March 20, 2010.

The Otter Tail County Historical Society was chosen earlier this year by the Minnesota Humanities Center to host this unique exhibit, part of the Museum on Main Street project—a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations.

“We are very pleased to be able to bring *Between Fences* to our area,” said Chris Schuelke, executive director of the Otter Tail County Historical Society. “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.”

Through a selection of artifacts, photographs, and illustrations, the *Between Fences* exhibits will explore the multiple meanings behind the everyday icon of the fence.

Whether made of spilt 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 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.

“Allowing *all* of Minnesota’s residents to have access to cultural resources and unique educational experiences is a priority of the Minnesota Humanities Center”, said Dr. Stanley Romanstein, President and CEO of the Minnesota Humanities Center. “We are

pleased to be working with the Smithsonian Institute, as well as the Otter Tail County Historical Society and other local museums and historical societies, to provide this opportunity.”

The Otter Tail County Historical Society is located at 1110 Lincoln Ave. W., Fergus Falls, MN 56537. The public opening takes place on Saturday, February 6, 2010 from 1-4 p.m. Otter Tail County Historical Society will have extended hours through the run of the exhibit ending March 20, 2010. New hours are Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5p.m. and weekends 1-4p.m.

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

About Minnesota Humanities Center

Through its emphasis on the humanities, the Minnesota Humanities Center works to build a thoughtful, literate, and engaged society. A Minnesota-based national center and clearing house for the best in the humanities, the Humanities Center: conducts professional development opportunities; creates and disseminates one-of-a-kind educational resources; partners with other organizations to offer humanities programming statewide; and operates a full-service meeting and event center. Founded in 1971, Minnesota Humanities Center is a nonprofit organization affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information, please visit www.minnesotahumanities.org.

About Museum on Main Street

Museum on Main Street (MoMS) is a one-of-a-kind cultural project that serves small town museums and residents of rural America. It is a partnership of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), the Federation of State Humanities Councils, and state humanities councils nationwide. Museum on Main Street combines the prestige of Smithsonian exhibitions, the program expertise of state humanities councils, and the remarkable volunteerism and unique histories of small rural towns. Museum on Main Street is funded by the United States Congress. To learn more about *Between Fences* and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit www.museumonmainstreet.org.

About Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services (SITES)

SITES connects millions of Americans with their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of art, science, and history exhibitions. To learn more, visit www.sites.si.edu.

-###-