



Underground Research Facility

South Dakota Science and Technology Authority

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March 1, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SURF invites the public to “Deep Talks: The Price of Gold” exhibit and reception

“Deep Talks: The Price of Gold” exhibit and reception will feature portraits of and stories from former Homestake Gold Mine employees

LEAD, SD— For more than a century, the Homestake Mining Company (Homestake) carved drifts deep beneath the rugged mountain town of Lead, South Dakota. Today, the Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF) operates in the same underground workings created by Homestake.

This month, SURF’s Deep Talks event series will introduce “The Price of Gold,” a collection of film portraits and oral histories from former Homestake employees. The exhibit will be on display at the Historic Homestake Opera House (HHOH) for the month of March. Join us for a reception with the artists on Thursday, March 10, from 6 to 7 p.m. MT at the HHOH, 309 W Main Street in Lead. This is a free event; light refreshments, including free Crow Peak beer, will be served. Masks are required to attend this event.

“Since the Davis Experiment in the 1960s, the Homestake Gold Mine has created a space for scientific discovery in the Black Hills,” said Constance Walter, communications director at SURF. “Our world-leading science is made possible through our vibrant history, and we are excited to partner with ‘The Price of Gold’ to celebrate that history through this exhibit and reception.”

The collection includes portraits of former miners, electricians, hoist operators, receptionists and chemists alongside their stories of life in a company town, humorous pranks, harried rescue operations and the loss of loved ones to mining accidents. “The Price of Gold” weaves together rugged, joyous and tragic stories from those who built their lives above and below the city of Lead. Created by Erin Lorraine Broberg and Nick Hubbard, the exhibit is a precursor to a book-length collection of the same name.

Although the project has been created independently of SURF, both creators were introduced to the Homestake story through their work at SURF.

“My position as a science writer at SURF introduced me to some of the amazing Homestake employees who returned to the facility to transform it from a mine into a world-class science laboratory,” said Broberg, communications specialist at SURF. “As they walked me through safety training or explained how the hoisting system worked, they would invariably tell a few stories about their time at Homestake. We soon realized that we wanted to preserve these stories in a lasting and beautiful way.”

Since 2019, Broberg and Hubbard have been interviewing and photographing former Homestake employees.

“This upcoming exhibit will feature selections from ‘The Price of Gold,’ with some of our favorite stories and portraits on display,” Broberg said. “We are thrilled to partner with SURF to host the exhibit in Lead where all these stories happened.”

The Deep Talks lecture series is sponsored by Crow Peak Brewing Company, RCS Construction, Northern Hills Federal Credit Union, Lynn's Dakotamart and Chuck and Jolene Lichtenwalner.

Sanford Underground Research Facility is operated by the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority (SDSTA) with funding from the Department of Energy's Office of Science. Our mission is to advance world class science and inspire learning across generations. Visit SURF at www.sanfordlab.org.