THE SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES AND TECHNOLOGY’S SCIENCE EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAM: EXPOSING YOUNG, INQUISITIVE MINDS TO THE WONDER OF SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The Museum of Geology at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (SDSMT) is known for its invaluable paleontological and mineralogical resources. Thousands of visitors pass through the Museum’s exhibits every year and give support to the Museum of Geology not only to ensure success of the museum, but also to bring the new Paleontology Research Center to life. Now is the time for the Museum of Geology’s students and staff to give back to the public and reach out to schools, children’s programs, and organizations in the Black Hills Region. SDSMT’s Science Education Outreach Program works to expose students to the disciplines of science that are not part of the traditional core curriculum at their grade level. The Museum of Geology, along with various student organizations, such as the Paleontology Club, Tech Geologic Association (TGA), and the Society of Economic Geology (SEG), allows undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to create and execute demonstrations for K-12 students touching on the concepts of paleontology/fossils, rocks and minerals, plants and animals in the Black Hills, and hydrology/groundwater. The presentations are unique in that they can be formatted to fit any grade level, in any location, allowing teachers the option to incorporate the various themes into their own curriculum, while still meeting educational standards of South Dakota. When a local school or organization requests an outreach subject, SDSMT will provide teaching kits, as well as an outreach instructor. These kits include books and manuals, pertinent information, hands-on activities, and even suggestions about how to incorporate the presented topic into other subjects aside from science.