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(Neb.) - The 150th Anniversary of the Signing of the Homestead Act of 1862

By: John Thayer Posted at: 05/16/2012 09:32 AM

Homestead National Monument of America will host the Nation's Signature Event commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the signing of the Homestead Act of 1862. The event will be held at the Homestead Heritage Center on Sunday May 20, 2012 beginning at 6 p.m. This land mark legislation was signed by President Abraham Lincoln exactly 150 years earlier on May 20, 1862 in an effort to open up the interior of the country to small farmers. The legislation forever changed the land, people, industry and agriculture of the United States.

In recognition of the changes this legislation had on the nation and the world, Homestead National Monument of America has a wonderful program planned. The program will begin with a special processional of 30 state flags to represent the states that were homesteaded. Each flag will be carried by a descendant of a homesteader from that specific state. Following the processional, Homestead has planned a special group of national speakers that will offer reflections on the impact and legacy of homesteading. Shortly after the guest speakers, the United States Air Force Band, or The Brass in Blue, will perform a special concert from 8:00 – 9:00 p.m. This show will include traditional pioneer and patriotic songs. And concluding the evening's events will be a one of a kind laser light show from 9:15-9:45 p.m. This amazing performance will tell the 150 year history of homesteading in a visually stunning light routine specially created for this Anniversary.

In addition, the original Homestead Act of 1862 signed by Abraham Lincoln will be on display. There will be onsite concessions, open hiking trails, a real homesteader's cabin to explore and much, much more! Parking for the General Public will be at the Gage County Fairgrounds with free shuttle service to the event. Handicapped parking will be available at the Heritage Center parking lot at Homestead National Monument of America.

Remember, Homestead National Monument of America has an exciting schedule of events planned for 2012, the 150th Anniversary of the Homestead Act of 1862. Keep up with the latest information by following us on Twitter (HomesteadNM) and Facebook (Homestead National Monument of America).

Homestead National Monument of America is a unit of the National Park Service located four miles west of Beatrice, Nebraska. Hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Admission is free of charge. For additional information, please call 402-223-3514 or visit http://www.nps.gov/home/index.htm.

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