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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Chicks Are Hatching

March 3, 2011, Hastings, MN - Excitement is growing in Mrs. Duea's classroom at Pinecrest Elementary School in Hastings, MN, as first grade students track the progress of live chicks hatching in an egg incubator. Thanks to grant funding from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture through the Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation (Agriculture Literacy in the Classroom grant,) Dakota County Historical Society staff purchased an egg incubator and other classroom supplies to support this exciting new learning experience. Grant funds are provided courtesy of the Foundation based on annual funding provided by Minnesota's agricultural community. This grant program is targeted at K-12 practicing educators with cash awards offered to encourage educators to bring agriculture and food systems education "to life" by effectively integrating related content into the classroom or school.

This project will teach the children more about the lives of chickens and how they grow. There will be a lot of "Cheep, Cheep" sounds coming from this classroom, as it is expected that the chicks will hatch March 7 or 8, 2011. The incubator and other materials can be reused, so this project can continue seasonally for many years to come.

In early May the chicks will join the mother hens from last season in the historically-designed chicken coop at the LeDuc Historic Estate. It was in 2010 that the chicken coop was built by volunteers and the chicks made their debut. Mrs. Duea's class will visit "their" chickens in the new, larger flock of heritage-breed chickens and have a free guided tour of the Estate this spring thanks to support from the Friends of LeDuc of Historic Hastings, a chapter of the Dakota County Historical Society. Visitors from last season and new visitors are encouraged to enjoy and feed the complete flock of chickens in the live-animal display at the LeDuc Historic Estate. For more information please visit www.dakotahistory.org or call 651-437-7055.

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