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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **The LeDuc Historic Estate in Hastings, MN: A fun-filled SEVENTH season opens soon!**

On May 25<sup>th</sup> the LeDuc Historic Estate opens for its seventh and most program-packed season ever! The theme for the year is the new mission of the Estate – ***To preserve the history of the LeDuc family and Hastings area through programs that educate, entertain, and encourage community participation.*** From school tours and international needlework exhibitions to our largest Civil War and arts festivals ever, there is something for everyone in 2011!

Located in beautiful, historic Hastings, the LeDuc Historic Estate at 1629 Vermillion Street (US Hwy 61) opens on Wednesday, May 25 for its regular tour season. Guided tours are available Wednesday through Sunday of each week: at 10 and 11:30 a.m., 1, 2:30 & 4 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays, and 1, 2:30 & 4 p.m. on Sundays through October 30, 2011. Tours are offered **FREE** for Members of the Dakota County Historical Society (DCHS), active duty military families (DCHS participates in the National Endowment for the Arts' Blue Star Museums program), and for children ages 5 and younger. Admission rates start at only \$3 for Students, \$6 for Adults, and a discounted admission price of \$5 for Seniors (ages 60+) and military veterans. Private and custom tours for groups of 10 or more may be scheduled any time of year by calling (651) 437-7055. School tours are offered free of charge year-round; the site is also available for rent for special events like weddings, parties, and business meetings, and more. The LeDuc Historic Estate is owned by the City of Hastings and managed by the Dakota County Historical Society. To learn more, visit [www.dakotahistory.org](http://www.dakotahistory.org) or call 651-437-7055.

### **Schedule of 2011 Events (NEW events marked by \*\*\*)**

**Chicks, Chicks, Chicks** On Saturday, May 7, our heritage-breed chicks and their mother hens will arrive for display in their historically-designed chicken coop and run! View the chickens all season long (price included with admission fee) and learn more about the agricultural activities that happened on the property during the LeDuc's time.

**City-Wide Garage Sale** May 6-7 The LeDuc Historic Estate will be one of the stops for shopping for antiques and collectibles and plants. FREE and open to the public.

**\*\*\*Authors' Sunday** May 15, 1 p.m. Local authors read from their books, describe their writing craft, and sign and sell their books. FREE and open to the public, and refreshments are served. Cindy Thury Smith and Shirley Dalaska talk about their book ***Civil War Veterans: Hastings, MN. A Documented List with Selected Biographies.*** David Page, Chair of the Journalism Department at Inver Hills Community College, presents on F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Civil War.

**Free School Programs – Guided Tours and Civil War Traveling Trunk Programs** Teachers throughout Minnesota are invited to bring students to the LeDuc Historic Estate for a free guided tour, or host a Civil War Trunk program in their classroom. The trunk is filled with Civil War artifacts and reproductions to help students learn about this important time in history. Call 651-437-7055 to schedule a tour or school program.

**\*\*\*Communal Garden** Plans for a new, communal garden will be discussed during meetings on the first Thursday of each month at LeDuc, 7 p.m. from March through October. All interested gardeners are welcome to join in this hands-on project! Volunteer gardeners of all ages will learn about heirloom seeds and plants used by the LeDucs, who were at one time major market gardeners, as well as some of the traditional gardening techniques from their time. A major goal of this project is to facilitate connections between people, as well as between people and the earth. Join in to learn more about where your food comes from, get introduced to new foods, and perhaps take home some of the “fruits of your labor”! Additionally, we hope to provide fresh vegetables to supplement the food shelf operations of Hastings Family Service.

**Life with the LeDucs Youth Camp** June 13-17. Children ages 10-14 will experience the 19<sup>th</sup> century while they learn about the LeDuc family and their daily lives. Campers will dress in period costumes to take part in a range of hands-on activities: croquet and fencing, butter churning and baking bread over a campfire, exploring their family tree, learning about the Civil War, journaling and writing letters to soldiers, and craft projects like making a candle lantern and dipping candles. Registration is through Hastings Community Education at [www.HastingsCommunityEd.com](http://www.HastingsCommunityEd.com) or call 651-480-7670.

**\*\*\*International Art Competition and Exhibit Opening** June 25, 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Selected entries from the *Modern Interpretations of Historic Designs II Competition* will be on display; on this day only we will have special programs, demonstrations, and talks covering the history and significance of the Hastings Needle Work Company, a company owned by the LeDuc women. Dr. Ann Braaten, who has done considerable research on the company, will present “Exploring the Design Methods of the Hastings Needle Work Company” both morning and afternoon. Reservations for this presentation (seating is limited) can be made at 651-437-7055.

**LeDuc Book Group** Join this librarian-led book club that meets the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. (in the LeDuc library at the Estate) to discuss interesting books. Books titles include historical non-fiction and a wide range of topics; a list of upcoming selections is available at [www.dakotahistory.org](http://www.dakotahistory.org) FREE and open to the public.

**Friends of LeDuc of Historic Hastings** Members meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Estate. A short business meeting is regularly followed by a program or speaker on topics including the arts, history, and more. FREE and open to the public. Visit [www.dakotahistory.org](http://www.dakotahistory.org) for information on upcoming programs and speakers.

**\*\*\*Experience Life with the LeDucs II Youth Camp** August 2-4 Children ages 10-14 will have another opportunity to take a trip back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century or experience it for the first time. They will dress in period costumes and explore more of what life was like for the LeDuc family. Activities include: building stilts, sketching and painting a watercolor masterpiece with local artist David Geister, cooking treats over an open fire, competing in tournaments for croquet and marbles, and much more. Registration is through Hastings Community Education – call 651-480-7670 or visit [www.HastingsCommunityEd.com](http://www.HastingsCommunityEd.com) for details.

**Hastings Community Concert Series** August 7, 14, 21, and 28, 7 p.m. in the LeDuc apple orchard. Bring a blanket or a lawn chair and enjoy this FREE entertainment presented by the Hastings Concert Association. Refreshments served by local organizations to raise funds for community needs. A special tour of the LeDuc house is available at 5:30 p.m. at regular rates. Visit [www.dakotahistory.org](http://www.dakotahistory.org) for a listing of artists coming to this music series.

**Civil War Weekend: “Over the Brink” in 1861** September 10-11, 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. We explore the beginning and first year of the war, from the months leading up to the outbreak of hostilities, to the winter encampments of both Union and Confederate armies. In addition to full encampments of Union and Confederate soldier re-enactors, there will be musicians, medics, Soldiers’ Aid Societies, and other civilian and political re-enactors performing at the Estate. Regular admission rates apply, and stay tuned for daily schedules posted soon!

**Art Show and Country Market** September 24, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some of the best artists and craftspeople in the region will be available at this combination art fair, antiques sale, and farmers' market during the **Take Me to the River** art show and sale and the **LeDuc-Simmons Country Market**. Sponsored by ArtReach St. Croix, Hastings Prescott Area Arts Council, Friends of LeDuc of Historic Hastings, and the Dakota County Historical Society. Admission to the grounds is FREE, but tours of the house are at regular rates.

**\*\*\*Guided Cemetery Tours** October 15 and 16 at Lakeside Cemetery, Hastings. Reserve your spot for this exciting new, guided cemetery tour! Attendees will meet at the Estate and be shuttled to and from the cemetery; you will visit the graves of LeDuc family members and Carroll Simmons (the second owner of the LeDuc house) and be greeted by living history re-enactors portraying some of these people, as well as other interesting characters from historic Hastings. Cemetery tours will be at 2 p.m., 3:30, 5, 6:30, 8, and 9:30 p.m. each day. \$5 per person, pre-registration and pre-payment required by phone at 651-437-7055.

**Harvest Haunting** October 29, 5-9 p.m. Family-friendly event with spooky storytelling, candlelight tours of the LeDuc cellar, a scary walk in the woods with ghosts and goblins, and seasonal tasty treats like fresh apple cider and s'mores. This event sells out – please register early by calling 651-437-7055. \$5 per person, discounted rate for DCHS members.

**Hastings Artists Show and Sale** November 5-13, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Enjoy (and purchase!) the work of the best regional artists in warm, inviting atmosphere of the LeDuc house. Complete your holiday shopping list early during this FREE event! A wide array of goods from photographers, painters, potters, and metal and fiber artists will be available.

**Victorian Holidays** December 3 & 4 and December 10 & 11, 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. The LeDuc house radiates Victorian beauty with magnificent period decorations and special guided house tours on both weekends. A gourmet Victorian Holiday Dinner with entertainment will be offered on Sunday, December 4 only. This event sells out, so reserve your place early.

**Step-On Guided Tours of Hastings** Our tour guides climb aboard your tour bus to provide an interesting, hour-long tour of Hastings. Learn more about Hastings' significant properties, architecture, and history by booking your tour at 651-437-7055.

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