

## **Full-mount buffalo to be unveiled**

### **July 3 at Hettinger Museum**

It's a moment the Hettinger community has waited for—a dream come true! Now complete, a full-mount buffalo bull will be presented to the Dakota Buttes Museum on Saturday, July 3, at 1:30 pm.

Mounted by Randy Holler of Hettinger, national award-winning taxidermist, and donated by Don Archibald, Lodgepole bison rancher, the bull stands seven feet high and eight feet long. His name will be announced at the unveiling as selected in a contest of local students and others.

An added attraction, Jim Strand's pet "Lucky"—a live buffalo calf—will be on hand to greet visitors. A buffalo barbeque and brats dinner will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the museum picnic area under the trees, with musical entertainment. In case of stormy weather dinner will be in the Armory.

The big bull was shot on the Archibald ranch by Ralph Kieley of Grafton on a cold, bone-chilling day of a cold winter, Jan 3, 2009, ensuring a prime hair coat. Kieley, a frequent pheasant hunter in this area, won the Trophy Buffalo Hunt raffle, plus a skull and photo of his hunt for display in the museum. Second and third place winners, Stacey LaRose, Reeder, and Darin Olson, Colorado Springs, also won buffalo skulls. The hunt was arranged by area bison ranchers Jim Strand and Don Archibald.

This new addition to Dakota Buttes Museum honors the last stand of the American buffalo and the final hunts in 1882 and 1883, conducted here by Teton Lakota on what were then reservation lands. Contrary to popular perception, these last 50,000 buffalo were killed, not by white hide hunters, but by Native Americans with traditional ceremony and respect for the hunted.

Holler, who served as 2008-2010 president of the North Dakota Taxidermists Association, began work on the mount immediately after the buffalo was shot. He donated half his services for the monumental 18-month task.

Ed Verhulst assisted and used Dakota Pack equipment in butchering and transporting the 2,000 pound bull. When skinned, the hide alone weighed 300 pounds.

"If it weren't for Ed and his crew, that job would not have been possible," said Holler.

Planned backdrop for the bull is a large color mural depicting buffalo grazing the hills south of White Butte on the Floyd Johnson ranch, as photographed by Donna Keller and Jim Strand.

The project cost around \$10,000 for butchering, tanning, internal support structure, base, display and taxidermy work, funded entirely by donations and the Trophy Hunt raffle. It also required hundreds of donated and pledged volunteer hours. Any surplus funds will be donated to the museum.

The Buffalo Heritage Committee thanks the community for generous support of this project, and is grateful to all who donated and purchased raffle tickets, to the bison ranchers of the area, Dakota Pack and the Dakota Buttes Historical Society.

Serving on the Buffalo Heritage committee are Bonnie Smith, chair, Dan and Gladys Merwin, Randy Holler, Don Archibald, Jim Strand, Donna Keller, Francie Berg, Howard Nelson, Bob Pagel, Phyllis Enerson, Larry Jackson, Loren Luckow and Betty Svihovec. For more information see the website [www.hettingernd.com/Tourism.html](http://www.hettingernd.com/Tourism.html), or call the Hettinger Chamber (701-567-2531).