



Office of the President

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March 19, 2025

Texas State Fire Marshal's Office
Attn: Assistant Fire Marshal, Chuck Allen
PO Box 12107
Austin, TX 78711

Re: Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum

Dear Chief Allen,

West Texas A&M University has received your letter concerning SFMO reports 13850 and 13833 sent on March 18, 2025. The Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum will remain closed to the public until we are able to secure funding to correct the items listed within your letter. In the meantime, we will utilize a fire watch while museum employees are in the building during working hours to ensure their safety addressing issues contained in the report.

We are working on a plan for removing all storage items that exceed the capabilities of the current sprinkler system, or lack thereof, which creates unsafe fire loading within the building. Due to the historical nature of these items, relocation will take time and significant funding. Attached is the recent feasibility study for a new museum which addresses all of the findings in the fire marshal's report and is our plan. The full report can be found at <https://www.wtamu.edu/webres/wt-pphm.html>.

Museum staff are currently working on removal of storage items within all means of egress, from exit stairs, and landings. We expect this work to be completed within the next two weeks. The staff is also working on removal of flammable and combustible materials from all areas of the building; however, many of these items are considered artifacts, so care and time will be needed to properly secure them.

An evaluation of the electrical system by a certified electrician will be conducted as soon as possible.

We will work with our facilities group to identify and seal all openings in fire-rated partitions which will begin as soon as possible. We will keep you informed on our progress.

The building's fire protection system was tested and inspected on July 22, 2024. The system received yellow tags for a missing three-year air leak test, a taped sprinkler, an upright sprinkler in the pendant position, and possible water in the air compressor oil. All of those items were corrected by our fire sprinkler contractor and the yellow tags have been removed.

On January 6, 2025, the fire alarm system was inspected, tested and confirmed to be operational. A yellow tag was placed for an inoperable strobe on the second floor. We are working with our fire alarm contractor to correct the yellow tag item and expect it to be completed within the next two weeks.

The remaining items in your letter will require securing substantial funding. As previously stated, the building will remain closed to the public until the funding is secured and a plan for correction has been approved. We will keep you up to date on our progress.

Respectfully,

Walter V. Wendler
President