



STATE OF ARKANSAS
**Department of Finance
and Administration**

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November 18, 2014

Senator David J. Sanders, Co-Chair
Representative Jeff Wardlaw, Co-Chair
ALC-Review Committee
One Capital Mall, 5th Floor
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: Historic Site Renovation Request

Dear Senator Sanders and Representative Wardlaw:

Arkansas Code §22-9-208 requires that requests for renovations of historic sites be reviewed and approved by the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State and Legislative Council. I have approved the attached request submitted by the Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia for the restoration of the SAU Greek Theater and ask that Legislative Council also approve the request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard A. Weiss".

Richard A. Weiss
Director

RAW:psl

Attachments



Office of Financial Services

October 27, 2014

Mr. Richard Weiss, Director
Department of Finance and Administration
401 DFA Building
1509 West 7th Street
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

RECEIVED
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OFF. DIRECTORS OFFICE

Dear Mr. Weiss:

Enclosed is a Historic Sites Review Request for your review pursuant to Arkansas Code Section 22-9-208. The following information is paraphrased from *Southern Arkansas University, the Mulerider School's Centennial History*, by Dr. James Willis, Emeritus Professor of History, and documents the significance of the structure:

Students cleared the ground in a pine tree grove on the campus's southeast corner in April of 1936 for the Greek Theater. These students were enrolled in a history class and were constructing a place to stage a Greek play, Sophocles' *Antigone*, as the class's capstone experience. This was made possible when the graduating class of 1936 voted to spend the \$200 they had raised for a class memorial on a Greek Theater. Leaving a permanent structure behind to improve the school was a tradition established in the 1920s. A student also drafted the blueprint for the Greek Theater followed in the construction. Students dug the traditional orchestra pit, and with the help from a manual arts class, nailed together wooden forms into which they poured concrete for the stage. The manual arts class built molds for the fluted Doric columns that framed the stage. The structure was not finished as time ran out and construction was halted and the performance of *Antigone* was held during the last week of school.

Later in 1937-1938, National Youth Administration (NYA) vocational students constructed a semicircular set of concrete bleachers facing the stage providing seating for several hundred people. The NYA provided jobs for students and youth in the way Works Progress Administration did for adults and Civilian Conservation Corps did for youth. A lesser-known part of the NYA provided work and vocational training for youth not enrolled in college. The NYA program, one of four in the state, housed eighty young men learning crafts through work experience and noncredit vocational classes. It was these young men that built the seating.

The Greek Theater symbolized changes that occurred as Magnolia A&M (now Southern Arkansas University) became a full-fledged junior college. The agricultural school begun a quarter century earlier was transformed in fundamental ways. The SAU Greek Theater is one of two such campus structures in Arkansas. The other is on the University of Arkansas campus in Fayetteville. Both are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

SAU has received grant funding through the Arkansas Natural & Cultural Resources Council for restoration of the Greek Theater and requests approval to move forward with contract bidding and award under the Historic Site process found in Arkansas Code Section 22-9-208 et seq.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul A. McLendon".

Paul A. McLendon
Vice President for Finance

HISTORIC SITES REVIEW REQUEST

Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. 22-9-208, the following is a request for placement on the agendas of Arkansas Legislative Council's Review Committee and the ABA Council; as well as review by the State Chief Fiscal Officer:

Agency Name: Southern Arkansas University

Location of the Proposed Project: Southern Arkansas University Campus in Magnolia, AR
Purpose of the Proposed Project: Restoration of the SAU Greek Theater

Type(s) of Fund(s) to be utilized: 90% Grant Funds from the Arkansas Natural & Cultural Resources Council, 10% from SAU Cash Funds

(If multiple funds are used, then indicate the % of each)

Estimated Proposed Project Cost: \$130,900

Preparer of Plans/Specs: Witzell, Evans, Rasco Architects

(Indicate the name of the design professional or firm, agency or other entity/individual responsible to provide the project plans and specifications.)

Contract Expiration Date: June 30, 2015

Contact Paul McLendon for additional information.

(Name of Agency Contact/Phone Number)

**Southern Arkansas University
870-235-5008**

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul McLendon

10-27-2014

Name/Title/Agency

**Paul McLendon
Vice President For Finance
Southern Arkansas University**

Date