

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## WNMU MUSEUM REOPENS MAIN ENTRANCE

### WEEKEND HOURS RESUME

Silver City, NM –Visitors to the WNMU Museum are now able to enter the main entry foyer on 10<sup>th</sup> street with completion of renovation updates to the ceiling that experienced a partial collapse on May 11. The University Museum’s weekend hours resume Saturday, July 23.

The University Museum’s Main Entrance and three-story wood grand staircase were closed to visitors after the partial collapse, and an alternate entrance on Alabama Street, now closed, was opened. The University Museum was secured for the evening at the time of the collapse and all staff had left premises.

The collapse was due to plaster failure. The original plaster ceiling was constructed by securing wire mesh to the two inch by eight foot/10 foot joists with half-inch staples. The plaster, consisting of quartz sand, and pig and horsehair, was applied to the wire mesh by hand and was up to three inches thick in some places. After 96 years, the half-inch staples could no longer hold the weight of the liberally applied plaster.

As construction and repair continue, visitors will encounter noise, dust, and fresh paint odor. Sections of the museum continue to have restricted access. The second floor exhibition rooms remain closed due to high concentration of dust due to the removal and installation of another ceiling. Also closed to access is the east section of the wood grand staircase in the main entry foyer that was damaged during the collapse. It will remain closed until repairs to the wood banisters are complete

The WNMU Museum building, Fleming Hall, was constructed in 1916-1917 of local brick for \$25,000. The completed building was said to be “state of the art.” Fleming Hall, part of the WNMU Historic District, is on the New Mexico State Register of Historic Properties and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The University Museum is open Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 4:30pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10:00am to 4:00pm. It is closed university holidays and closure dates. Admission is free and the building is handicapped accessible.

For more information, please contact University Museum Director & Archaeologist Dr.

Cynthia Ann Bettison or Acting Assistant Director Phillip Cave at (575) 538-6386 or at BettisonC@wnmu.edu or [CaveP@wnmu.edu](mailto:CaveP@wnmu.edu).



*Pictured is the main entrance to the WNMU Museum off of 10<sup>th</sup> Street.*

*Located in Silver City, New Mexico, Western New Mexico University has served the people of the state of New Mexico and its surrounding areas as a comprehensive, regional, rural, public coeducational university since 1893 and caters to a student body diverse in age, culture, language and ethnic background.*

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