

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**Regarding the Initiation of Section 106 Review of**  
**Arkansas State University's Restoration Work**  
**At the Historic Dyess Colony**

The National Endowment for the Humanities has offered Arkansas State University a grant to contribute to the restoration or reconstruction of three buildings at the Historic Dyess Colony, an agricultural resettlement colony during the New Deal. The buildings will be utilized in telling the story of this federal cooperative effort to give destitute farmers (including the family of music icon Johnny Cash) a chance for a new start in life.

NEH is an independent grant-making agency of the United States government dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities. This public notice is issued as part of NEH's responsibilities under 36 C.F.R. part 800, the regulations which implement Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. § 470. NEH, as a funding agency, is required by regulation to identify and assess the effects of any proposed actions on historic properties. If any proposed action will have an adverse effect on historic resources, NEH works with the appropriate parties to seek ways to identify and assess the effects of any proposed actions on historic properties. If any proposed action will have an adverse effect on historic resources, NEH works with the appropriate parties to seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects. Additionally, the Section 106 regulations require NEH to consider the views of the public on preservation issues when making the final decisions that affect historic properties.

Arkansas State University proposes to complete the first floor interior restoration of the Dyess Colony Center's Administration Building and add a handicapped ramp. A final phase will be to complete the second floor restoration and install an elevator. Upon completion of the Administration Building restoration, the City of Dyess will occupy space in the south wing of the first floor, while the north wing will be utilized for exhibits related to the history of the Dyess Colony, lifestyles of typical colonists, and the impact of growing up in Dyess on Johnny Cash and his music.

Adjacent to the Administration Building, the Dyess Theater was added to the Colony Center in 1948 after the original café/community building on that site burned. It is a contributing structure to the National Register of Historic Places historic district designation. Since placement on the Register in 1976, this building has deteriorated and only the front façade remains. ASU proposes to build a new structure behind and attached to the extant theater façade in the colony center. This new structure will serve as the visitor destination for travelers along the Arkansas section of the Great River Road National Scenic Byway and as the starting point for visitors to Historic Dyess Colony. The Dyess Theater building will show introductory films and films of the period and host special programs about the agricultural heritage of the Arkansas Delta, the colonization project, its most famous resident—Johnny Cash, and other humanities offerings. It will be the first stop for student field trips, national and international motor coach tours, and individual tourists, as well as scholars visiting Dyess.

The Johnny Cash Boyhood Home is one of relatively few remaining original colony houses that has not been severely altered. The Cash house represents the typical five-room Dyess Colony farm house and is located approximately one mile from the Colony Center on a gravel county road. An estimated 80 percent of the original historic fabric was found to be in place and preserved by later cosmetic additions to the structure. The Johnny Cash Boyhood Home was determined in 2011 by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program to be ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in its current condition. Since it was acquired by Arkansas State University in April 2011, restoration has proceeded utilizing private funds raised through two Johnny Cash Music Festivals. Restoration is essentially complete on the half-acre site, except for furnishings for the home and exterior landscaping. ASU also proposes to recreate the outbuildings that originally existed on the property, including a barn, smokehouse, chicken coop, and outhouse. The house will be open to visitors. Humanities activities for students and the public will be housed in the ancillary structures within the farmstead.

ASU will also acquire 3.65 acres immediately adjacent to the west side of the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home to add parking, restrooms, security, and other visitor services.

In this public notice, NEH is providing the public with information about the Arkansas State University project at the Historic Dyess Colony. We are also seeking public input on this project, and would appreciate comments reflecting any knowledge of, or concerns with, historic properties in the proposed project area, including any issues relating to the project's potential effects on historic properties, by April 12, 2013.

Comments may be submitted to the NEH via email at [aanderson@neh.gov](mailto:aanderson@neh.gov) or by regular mail to: National Endowment for the Humanities, Office of Challenge Grants, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Room 420, Washington, DC 20506.