SWOSU-Sayre Instructor Raising Money for Willow Missile Site Historical Marker

06.15.2017

Southwestern Oklahoma State University-Sayre History Instructor Landry Brewer wants the public to know that the little town of Willow in Greer County was integral to national security during the Cold War.

Last fall Brewer began researching 12 sites near Altus Air Force Base that housed Atlas F Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles as part of the nation's Cold War nuclear arsenal in the early 1960s.

Brewer was so impressed by what he learned that he applied to the Oklahoma Historical Society for a historical marker to be placed at the Willow missile site. The OHS granted his request and is now raising the approximate $2,500 cost of the historical marker, and he has partnered with the Old Greer County Museum in Mangum to receive contributions.

"As a history instructor for SWOSU in Sayre, I'm interested in preserving local, state and national history," Brewer said. "The missile sites in southwest Oklahoma fall into all three categories."

The nuclear missiles stored at Willow and 11 other locations were attached to the 577th Strategic Missile Squadron at Altus Air Force Base and were designed to be fired at the Soviet Union during a nuclear war. Other locations were at: Lone Wolf, Snyder, Cache, Frederick, Creta, Hollis, Russell, Willow, Hobart, Manitou and Granite.

"Learning the enormity of the missile-site project and its importance to both the state and the nation during the Cold War has been fascinating," Brewer said. "This marker will help preserve this part of Western Oklahoma's history and educate individuals about the site's importance in protecting the nation during what was arguably the most dangerous period in world history."

Individuals and groups that would like to support this endeavor may send their tax-deductible contributions to the Old Greer County Museum at P.O. Box 2, Mangum, OK 73554. Checks should be made out to Old Greer County Museum but Willow Missile Site Historical Marker should be specified on the memo line.