

Willow Missile Site Historic Marker Funding Campaign is Complete

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University-Sayre History Instructor Landry Brewer is one-step closer to placing a historic marker near Willow.

Last fall Brewer began researching the 12 sites near Altus Air Force Base that housed Atlas F Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles in the early 1960s for a paper that he submitted to *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, the journal of the state historical society.

One of the 12 sites was near Willow in Greer County.

Realizing the significance of the Atlas Missile program to the state and nation, Brewer applied to the Oklahoma Historical Society for a historic marker to be placed at the Willow site. After the OHS granted his request, Brewer collaborated with the Old Greer County Museum in Mangum to receive marker donations.

"The museum notified me that one of the donors generously offered to pay the entire purchase price of the marker," Brewer said. "The other donations received will pay for marker delivery, installation, maintenance and any other costs."

The nuclear missiles stored at Willow and 11 other locations were attached to the 577th Strategic Missile Squadron at Altus Air Force Base. Those other locations were near Lone Wolf, Snyder, Cache, Frederick, Creta, Hollis, Russell, Hobart, Manitou, Granite and Fargo, Tex.

Brewer said the marker is scheduled to be delivered to Willow in mid-October.

SWOSU is also hosting a two-night missile-site seminar in October, with one night at Sayre and one at Weatherford, which will be free and open to the public. The Sayre-campus event will be the evening of October 16, and the Weatherford event will follow later in the month.

Brewer's paper about the missile sites is scheduled to be published in the fall edition of *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, and publication will approximately coincide with both the SWOSU missile-site seminar and the Willow marker's installation.

"The paper, the seminar and the marker will help preserve this part of Western Oklahoma's history and educate individuals about the importance of all 12 of the missile sites in protecting the nation during what was arguably the most dangerous period in world history," Brewer said.

Brewer expressed gratitude to the Old Greer County Museum in Mangum for its role in the marker project, including receiving donations and maintaining the donor list. Brewer also thank all of the donors, which include the following:

- Greater Houston Community Foundation (Charles Doyle and Family)
- Max Post
- First National Bank & Trust of Elk City
- Legacy Bank of Elk City
- James and Nancy Greer

