

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR
PRAYER BREAKFAST

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THE CHRONICLE

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Government shutdown closes National Black Museum indefinitely

BY ERICK JOHNSON
 SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The popular National Museum of African-American History and Culture (NMAAHC) closed Wednesday, Jan. 2, the latest attraction to close due to the partial government shutdown. Hundreds of employees at the museum have been furloughed as a result of the closure.

The closure threatens the travel plans of thousands of black students and families who are wrapping up their holiday breaks to explore their history on Constitution Avenue.

The NMAAHC is among the Smithsonian's 19 museums, galleries and National Zoo that have closed as the government shutdown heads into its 11th day.

All of the Smithsonian museums will be closed indefinitely as Congress and President Donald Trump continue to clash over a budget that includes Trump's plans to raise \$5 billion for a wall along the Mexican border. With billions to go and partisan politics, lawmakers are far from ending the stalemate anytime soon.

The U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Interior, Commerce and Justice have been shuttered since the partial shutdown began Dec. 22. Other federal agencies and attractions have kept their doors open with the help of state funding and surplus budgets. One of those attractions is the NMAAHC, which had a surplus budget that carried over from the prior year, said Linda St. Thomas, chief spokesman for the Smithsonian Museum Institution, which oversees the NMAAHC and its other attractions.

With no federal budget, all of the government employees at the Smithsonian's attractions will be furloughed. That means about 200 employees at NMAAHC won't be working until a federal budget has been hammered out.

"We are legally not allowed to stay open while there's no budget," St. Thomas said.

The museum's popular Sweet Home Café will close as well, though the facility is run by an outside company with non-government employees, St. Thomas said.

St. Thomas was unable to provide NMAAHC's spe-



Photo by Michael Barnes

Photo courtesy of The Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture

cific annual operating budget because it shares a \$51 million budget with the rest of Smithsonian's attractions.

The NMAAHC is the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African-American life, history, and culture. Established by a federal law in 2003, the opening on Sept. 24, 2016, followed decades of efforts to promote and highlight the contributions of African-Americans. The 400,000 square foot NMAAHC has attracted nearly a million people who have viewed

thousands of artifacts spanning five floors. The museum is the hottest museum in Washington, where busloads of black churches and family reunions make the NMAAHC a priority destination. To control record crowds, the free museum continues to use timed passes to regulate the flow of visitors.

It will be a rare scene for locals to see a closed NMAAHC and an empty and quiet front entrance.

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Daughters of Confederacy vow to fight following order to remove statue

BY TEVIN STINSON
 THE CHRONICLE

For over a week now the corner of Fourth and Liberty Streets has been the topic of discussions across the state following the vandalization of a Confederate statue outside the old Forsyth County Courthouse and the city's decision to allow the owners of the statue until the end of the month to have it removed from the corner downtown.

Although the clock to have the monument removed is set at less than 30 days, it seems as if the feud between the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the City of Winston Salem is just getting started.

Here's what we know; the series of events began on Christmas day. Just before 6 p.m. officers with the Winston-Salem Police Department (WSPD) responded to a call that the monument had been defaced. Upon arrival, officers found the words "Cowards & Traitors" written in permanent marker.

In response to the most recent case defacing, on the last day of 2018, City Attorney Angela Carmon issued a letter demanding that the statue erected in 1905 be



Photo by Tevin Stinson

For the past few weeks the Confederate statue outside the old Forsyth County Courthouse has been the topic of discussion across the state after "Cowards & Traitors" was written on the statue at Christmas.

removed by Jan. 31 or face legal action from the city. The city also offered to move the statue to Salem Cemetery where more than 30 Confederate graves are located, but the Daughters of the Confederacy declined.

During the city's annual Emancipation Proclamation

ceremony, Mayor Allen Joines said, in its current place downtown, the statue is creating a public nuisance. Over the years the statue has been at the center of controversy several times. In August of 2017, shortly after white supremacist marched in Charlottesville, Virginia, two sides of the statue were painted and the motto on the statue, "Our Confederate Dead" was covered. Less than 24-hours after that, men armed with shotguns and rifles spent hours protecting the statue from other vandals.

One of the men protecting the statue who didn't want to give his full name said they were just trying to protect a piece of history. He said, "We just don't see the point in taking these statues down. That's our stance: preserving history no matter good or bad. That's how you learn from it."

In the letter issued by Attorney Carmon, she explains the removal of the statue is about public safety. She also mentioned incidents in Charlottesville, Durham and Chapel Hill over Confederate monuments that led to civil unrest.

She wrote, "...vandals defaced the Confederate statue with the inflammatory words 'Cowards & Traitors' thereby invoking significant concern about the safety of the statue and the potential for confrontation, breaches of the peace and other nuisance type conduct similar to that endured by other cities.

"It is clear that the tenor of the vandal's message has escalated and the intensity of the same is not likely to wane with the passage of time. The city is not in a position to provide constant security checks necessary for the protection of the statue and to mitigate the recurring acts of vandalism."

In a statement released on Thursday, Jan. 4, the North Carolina Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy say they plan to do everything in their power to make sure the statue stays put.

The statement reads, "The North Carolina Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, wished to register our dismay at recent actions and statements of the city Winston-Salem regarding the Confederate memorial on

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U.S. Department of Education opens claim against WS/FCS

BY TEVIN STINSON
 THE CHRONICLE

Less than six months after the complaint was filed by the Action4Equity Coalition, citing failure on

behalf of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System to address complaints about issues at Ashley Elementary, the Office of Civil Rights at

the U.S. Department of Education has agreed to look into the claim.

A coalition of organizations including the local branch of the NAACP, the



Submitted photo

Ashley Elementary School

Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and

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