

Jewel Cave National Monument 11149 US Hwy 16 Building B12 Custer, SD 57730 605-673-8300 phone 605-673-8397 fax

Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Bradley Block / Chief of Interpretation / bradley_block@nps.gov

Jewel Cave National Monument Opens Cave for Tours

Custer – Jewel Cave National Monument has re-opened the cave for interpretive tours, after about one week of temporary closure. This past week, two elevators were found to be off-line and were not working according to expectations. Furthermore, the emergency lighting system was not fully working within the cave, and an internal test showed that portions of the cave tour route were not illuminated during a recent power outage. Both situations have been resolved and are back in working order.

Superintendent Larry Johnson states, "The Monument is excited to open the cave resource again and allow visitors the chance to witness one of America's most significant heritage sites. Even though the tour schedule was interrupted for about a week, the necessary testing and repairs had to be done in order to ensure a safe environment for visitors and staff."

Jewel Cave offers two different types of tours during the off-season. The ever popular Scenic Cave Tour is offered twice a day, 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. This one hour and 20-minute tour takes visitors along a one-half mile paved path that includes 723 stair steps. This tour is considered moderate to strenuous. The Discovery Tour is a 20-minute interpretive talk that exposes visitors to the cave resource. This tour is available for individuals with physical limitations or families with young children. Discovery Tours are offered three times daily, 9:05 a.m., 12:45 p.m., and 3:45 p.m.

Johnson further explains, "This news comes at a wonderful time, as the Monument prepares itself for Veterans Day on Thursday, November 11. This special day is being celebrated by the National Park Service through the waiving of entrance fees at all sites across the country. The Monument is pleased to honor our nation's veterans and active military by waiving all cave tour fees on Veterans Day." Due to the off-season, tickets are limited and only available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The cave temperature is approximately 49 °F. A light coat or sweater and sturdy walking shoes are recommended. All tours begin at the visitor center.

Jewel Cave National Monument is open year round, except for Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Years Day. The visitor center is currently open during the off-season from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To learn more about the Monument, call the visitor center at 605-673-8300 and select Option 2 or visit the Monument online at www.nps.gov/jeca.