



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

Jewel Cave  
National Monument

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## Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

Release Date: **July 9, 2011**

For Immediate Release

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### **Elevator Problems Temporarily Close Part of Jewel Cave for Tours**

Custer – Jewel Cave National Monument has temporarily closed part of the cave for public tours until further notice, due to technical difficulties with the elevator system. Two 28-story elevators at the Visitor Center serve as the primary transportation mode into the cave, but the elevators are currently off-line and are not available for use. The Monument continues to provide surface-based interpretive and educational programs throughout the day. Due to the lack of cave tours from the Visitor Center, additional Historic Lantern Tours that do not require elevators have been scheduled using the Historic Entrance.

The elevator maintenance crew under contract has been making necessary repairs. A timeline for completion of this maintenance action has not been set, other than the Monument is expecting to have the elevators operational in the near future. Superintendent Larry Johnson states, “At present, we are not sure why the elevators are not working properly. For the safety of our visitors and staff, the elevators have been shut down until further notice.”

Historic Lantern Tour participants still need to purchase tickets at the kiosk near the Visitor Center parking lot. Patio talks are slated on the hour, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Family hikes on the easy, one-quarter mile Roof Trail occur at 2:00 p.m. daily, as well as during times of heavy visitation and available staff. Johnson comments, “Even though visitors are not able to access the cave on the Scenic, Discovery, and Wild Cave Tours, we still want people to understand the significance of the second longest cave in the world. So, we encourage those visitors to go on a Historic Lantern Tour or participate in surface-based provocative programs and hands-on activities that take place daily and provide some story behind the scenery.”

The Visitor Center and elevators were constructed and installed at the Monument between 1970 and 1972. The opening day of the facilities took place on May 28, 1972. The elevators are 38 years old; however, they continue to provide service for the Monument on a daily basis. Even under daily usage, the elevators are considered commercial grade, are meant for constant visitor traffic, and are extremely well maintained. Johnson says, “To ensure the elevators are working properly, we’ve made a detailed inspection, are making the needed repairs, and will be doing extensive testing when the repairs are completed. We realize that July is not the optimal time for this to happen, and we regret having to disappoint our visitors. However, we will not compromise the safety of our visitors and employees.”

In addition to Historic Lantern Tours, the Visitor Center and surface resources continue to be available for visitor use. The Monument is open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., with park rangers available for visitor questions. To learn more about the Monument, call the visitor center at 605-673-8300 and select Option 2. Monument information can also be accessed online at [www.nps.gov/jeca](http://www.nps.gov/jeca).

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