

December 20, 2011

Governor Dave Heineman
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

Dear Governor Heineman,

I am the advisor for the Science Fiction and Fantasy (SF & F) Club, an active student organization at Wayne State College. On behalf of the students in this organization, I am writing to ask you for special dispensation for the Club to hold a Haunted House in Wayne.

The SF & F Club, with administrative approval, has been running a Haunted House in the Wayne area every year since 1998. Originally the location was at a dilapidated barn on the northeast edge of Wayne, on property that belonged to a staff member of the college. When he left several years ago, the location was moved to the Wayne County Fairgrounds.

I met with the Fair Board at that time and proposed an alliance, and they saw it as an opportunity to assist the Club in their endeavors and in a way, to give back to the community. There are no other Haunted Houses in the immediate area and the Fair Board felt this was an activity that would be worthy of continuing. October 2011 marked the fourth, maybe fifth, year we held a Haunted House at the Wayne County Fairgrounds. The building in question is used as the sheep barn during the Wayne County Fair and for storage during the winter. In October of each year it is transformed into a Haunted House for a week or two. The students do a great job and the Haunted House has a good reputation. To my knowledge, there have never been any problems.

In October of 2011 there was one night I was not in attendance due to being in Colorado at a conference on International Education. That night James Sloup, a Deputy Fire Marshal, talked to my students and told them of a few changes he wanted to see. He told them they could finish the 2011 project, but they would need to meet certain guidelines in order to hold a Haunted House in the future. The suggestions he mentioned to my students for 2011 were good, and I should have had them in place to begin with. I e-mailed Mr. Sloup, apologizing for my absence and asking for clarification, and he responded with an attachment stating the guidelines for a Haunted House needed to be met if we wanted to do a Haunted House in the future. This is the first time I was aware of guidelines for a Haunted House.

I imagine with all of the information you deal with on a daily basis the guidelines for a Haunted House are not a top priority for you. I have included the guidelines at the end of this letter to refresh your memory. Since we have been in operation for the last fourteen years, and there has never been a problem, I am asking that the SF & F Club, with some safety refinements, be allowed to continue offering the Haunted House at the sheep barn located at the Wayne County Fairgrounds. Dave Jaegar,

The Wayne County Fair Board President, has indicated there are no problems with the Club continuing to use the sheep barn, but there is no possibility of them, or the SF & F Club, being able to meet the guidelines as stated for a Haunted House.

The building is long, and customers enter one side of it, walk through that side to the end, where they go through a maze ending up on the other side. They walk through the second half and exit out the opposite side of the building. Inside the building we partition off areas using plastic sheeting to create an illusion of separate rooms. We are proposing to have a fire extinguisher in each area, or "room," all actors/students will have a flashlight in case of an emergency and be trained on the use of the fire extinguishers, and they will have practiced egress routines in case of an emergency. As suggested by Mr. Sloup, the maze area at the end of the building will also have emergency exits. All emergency exits will have signage. Groups of people are always guided through the Haunted house and our guides will be trained on all emergency exit routes. In addition there will be students, as well as myself, whose duties are to monitor for any signs of an emergency.

Thank you for your time. Any assistance you can offer would be greatly appreciated so a Haunted House can continue to be offered in our area.

Sincerely,

Ron Vick, MA, LMHP
Counselor/Academic Advisor/Int'l Student Advisor
SF & F Club Advisor

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CC: Dave Jaegar, Wayne County Fair Board President
Jeff Carstens, WSC Vice President and Dean of Students

REQUIREMENTS FOR HAUNTED HOUSES

2000 Life Safety Code

General. All new and existing haunted houses, regardless of occupant load, shall meet the requirements for assembly occupancies in addition to the requirements of 12.4.7
12/13.4.7.1

Automatic Sprinklers shall be provided in every new haunted house building and new haunted house located within an existing building. The system shall be installed and maintained in accordance with Section 9.7. Where the haunted house building is movable or portable, the sprinkler water supply shall be permitted to be provided by an approved temporary means. **12.4.7.1**

Existing haunted house buildings with previous written approval are not required to provide sprinkler protection.

Smoke Detection. Where the nature of haunted house building is such that it operates in reduced lighting levels, the building shall be protected throughout by an approved automatic smoke detection system in accordance with Section 9.6. This shall be a commercial fire alarm system with smoke detection and audible/visual devices. *Battery or hardwired smoke detectors are NOT acceptable.* Actuation of any smoke detection system device shall sound an alarm at a constantly attended location on the premises. Actuation of the automatic sprinkler system, or any other suppression system, or actuation of a smoke detection system having an approved verification or cross-zoning operation capability shall provide the following:

- (1) Cause illumination in the means of egress to increase to that required by Section 7.8
- (2) Stop any conflicting or confusing sounds and visuals. **12/13.4.7.3**

Exit signs shall be provided in accordance with Section 7.10. **12/13.4.7.4** Floor proximity exit signs shall be provided in accordance with 7.10.1.6. **12/13.4.7.4.2** In haunted house where mazes, mirrors, or other designs are used to confound the egress path, approved directional exit marking that becomes apparent in an emergency shall be provided. **12/13.4.7.4.3** Consideration should be given to the provision of directional exit marking on or adjacent to the floor.

Emergency lighting shall be provided in accordance with Section 7.9. 12/13.2.9

Interior wall and ceiling finish shall be Class A throughout, complying with Section 10.2. **12/13.4.7.5**