



# Arkansas House Newsletter

**June 24, 2014**

## **Special Session to be Held in Old State House**

### **HOUSE TO HOLD EXTRAORDINARY SESSION IN OLD STATE HOUSE**

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (June 24, 2014) -

Monday will mark the first time the Arkansas House of Representatives has convened in the Old State House in over 30 years. It will also be the first time in over a century that substantial legislation will be introduced and debated in the Old State House Chamber.

The legislature will convene for an [Extraordinary Session on June 30 at 4pm](#). The Governor has called for the session to address solutions to rising teacher's insurance premiums and provide additional funding for correctional facilities.

An extensive restoration project currently taking place in the House Chamber at the Arkansas State Capitol prohibits members from using the chamber until the work is complete.

"History teaches us valuable lessons that we all carry with us when making decisions about our future. What better way to remember our heritage and honor the historic structures that shaped our state, than by passing legislation in the oldest standing Capitol building west of the Mississippi," said Speaker Davy Carter.

The first Arkansas General Assembly to meet in the Old State House was in 1836, the year that Arkansas became a state. The building wouldn't be completed until 1842, so the legislators met while construction continued around them.

The building was the site of several historical events of the nineteenth century in 1837, House Speaker John Wilson fatally stabbed Representative Joseph J. Anthony after a knife fight between the two started on the House floor.

Speaker Wilson may have never foreseen a day when anyone could view the proceedings of the House from the convenience of their home or office. Although the House hopes every Arkansan uses this opportunity to learn more about our history, we will continue to use our most modern technology. The House Communications Office has made arrangement to stream the Extraordinary Session live on its website [arkansashouse.org](http://arkansashouse.org).

Limited seating will be available to the public on a first come first serve basis. There will also be additional seating for overflow in what is known as the 1836 room.

The Old State House is a museum of the Department of Arkansas Heritage. Below are a few facts about the museum provided by the agency:

- In May 1861, the second session of the Secession Convention met in the original House of Representatives chamber and all but one delegate voted for the state to secede from the Union. The building was home to the Confederate government until Union forces captured Little Rock in September 1863.
- By the early 1900s, the building was in need of major repairs, and the legislature had outgrown it. The last session at the Old State House was in 1909, and much of the discussion centered around prohibition of alcohol. The legislature passed laws that session that, among other things, provided prosthetic limbs to Confederate veterans, banned toy guns, and introduced legislation to curb night riding and Klan activities.
- After the legislature left, the building became the home of the University of Arkansas Medical Department (now the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences) and was the site of the Crossett Experiment, one of the earliest and most successful malaria eradication programs in the world.
- The legislature met in the building again in 1951, to commemorate the building's new role as the Old State House Museum, a museum of Arkansas history from statehood to the present. The legislature met there again in 1983 for commemorative purposes.

For more information on the Old State House visit [www.oldstatehouse.com](http://www.oldstatehouse.com) .