KY Archaeological Survey moves to WKU

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Kentucky Archaeological Survey (or KAS) finds a new home at WKU after being cut from the University of Kentucky.

The agency will continue serving the whole state as Amy Bingham explains in this week’s View from the Hill.

Since 1995, Kentucky Archaeological Survey has worked with teachers, students, landowners, communities and government agencies to protect archaeological sights and educate the public about Kentucky’s rich archaeological heritage. Thanks to WKU, this work will continue.

 “This has been one of the most difficult times in my life.”

Eric Schlarb has been a staff archaeologist for Kentucky Archaeological Survey (or KAS) since 1997. A few months ago he thought he was losing his job.

 “It was rather shocking when the dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky decided that he no longer wanted to do the kinds of things we do, public outreach work with school kids.”

Then in May, WKU’s Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology offered to house the program here.

 “The opportunity to come to Western really makes a huge difference. It enables us to continue to do the work we’ve been building the last twenty years.”

KAS is nationally known for its leadership in public archaeology.

 “Having that reputation at Western is going to increase our profile. We expect it’s going to help us recruit students in our program because they’re gonna have opportunities here beyond the ones we can already offer to students.”

Students in grades K through twelve will also benefit from the educational initiatives offered by KAS.

 “We would anticipate that teachers, once we get established, can contact us and either we go into the schools or sometimes we have them come to archaeology lab and we have activities for them.”

The lab will be located in Cherry Hall and office space in the Fine Arts Center but KAS will mostly be on location bringing archaeology to people of the commonwealth.

 “I’ve worked from Harlan to Paducah. I’ve worked in almost every county in the state. Knowing that we can continue to work with people we’ve gotten along with in the past, that means a lot to us.”

 “We anticipate that WKU is going to be the hub for public archaeology in the state going forward.”

The Kentucky Archaeological Survey has been and will continue to be a self-funding unit. The ten year partnership with WKU went into effect on June first.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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