

USU Eastern Preserves Local History Through State Preservation Grant

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USU Eastern Speaker Series



The preservation of Eastern Utah history is moving forward thanks to a recently completed collections preservation project at Utah State University Eastern.

In 2025, USU Eastern's Eastern Special Collections & Archives was awarded a \$5,000 Utah Collections Preservation Grant to improve the preservation, storage, and accessibility of valuable historical collections housed within the university's Library & Learning Commons.

The grant has already created visible progress for the archives, according to Aimee Lauritsen, Archives & Special Collections and Library & Learning Commons building manager at USU Eastern.

"The collections in ESCA were without a completed inventory, and several collections did not have proper storage," Lauritsen said. "By creating a comprehensive inventory of all ESCA holdings, we can provide ease in access."

The funding allowed ESCA staff to purchase new shelving for a recently added workroom space as well as archival-safe preservation materials designed to protect delicate historical items from damage caused by light, dust, and age.

The new workroom and storage area, located in LLC 103, now serves as a dedicated space for storage, preservation work, research assistance, and collection organization. The improvements also enhance the experience for visitors and researchers using the Lee Reading Room in LLC 108.

Several important regional collections were preserved through the project, including:

- College of Eastern Utah Alumni Office scrapbooks (1938-1999).
- Castle Valley Community Theatre scrapbooks (1957-1997).
- Carbon College and College of Eastern Utah Debate scrapbooks (1938-2002).

Additional archival-safe file storage boxes were used to preserve the Utah State University Eastern Theatre Student Actors and Production files along with the College of Eastern Utah Alumni Member files.

As materials were properly preserved and organized, they were also added into a comprehensive inventory system that will improve access for researchers, students, staff, and community members.

Lauritsen emphasized the importance of preserving these collections not only for the university, but for the broader Eastern Utah community.

"Preservation of these collections is important not only to our campus but also our community," Lauritsen said. "Many things have changed over the years, but one thing that has not changed is the connection that our campus has with our community."

The collections housed within ESCA document decades of local education, theater, student life, leadership, and community engagement throughout the Carbon and Emery County region.

"The history and information preserved in these collections is invaluable," Lauritsen said. "The collections are available to use for research and public engagement."

While the grant project is nearing completion, Lauritsen said the work of preservation is ongoing.

"There is much continued work needed in our preservation efforts with additional collections waiting to be properly preserved and inventoried," she said, "but the progress made is truly visible and the grant received gave us a much needed push forward."

The project represents another step in USU Eastern's continued commitment to preserving the stories, memories, and historical connections that continue to shape Eastern Utah.

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