



Fall 10-31-2007

Johnson Hall Closed for Weekend Due to Theatre Fire

Winthrop University

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Winthrop University, "Johnson Hall Closed for Weekend Due to Theatre Fire" (2007). *Winthrop News 2007*. 94.
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10/26/2007



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Johnson Hall Closed for Weekend Due to Theatre Fire

Quick Facts

- A fire that began about 8:30 a.m. in the back of Johnson Theatre closed the building and cancelled classes Oct. 26.
- The fire may have been caused by a curtain left draped over or near a lighting unit on stage.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - A fire that started in the back of the **Johnson Theatre** stage led to the building's closing and cancellation of classes for the day.

Winthrop Police Chief Frank Zebedis said that a student working on a lighting project around 8:30 a.m. reported seeing smoke on the stage. She alerted police and a faculty member as **Johnson Hall** filled with smoke. Police believe the cause of the fire was a curtain left draped over or near a lighting unit on stage.

Campus police responded to clear the building of students and faculty members. City of Rock Hill firefighters brought the fire under control within five minutes of their arrival.

Classes were cancelled for the day so a restoration crew can evaluate the smoke and water damage in **Johnson Hall**, a 60,000-square-foot building that houses the **Department of Theatre and Dance** and the **Department of Mass Communication**.

Walter Hardin, associate vice president of facilities management, said the university will need to replace the theatre's curtains and lighting systems and to clean up smoke damage, such as the auditorium's more than 300 seats. It is too early for an estimate, he said, based on what can be cleaned and what will need to be replaced.

Classes should resume by Monday; however, the stage may take a few weeks to repair, Hardin said.

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