

Refuge Visitor Center to reopen Monday

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The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center will reopen Monday in its normal location, Refuge Manager Tony Booth has announced.

The Visitor Center at the junction of Oklahoma 49 and Oklahoma 115 has been closed for the past five weeks for replacement of carpet and updates to heating, plumbing and electrical systems. During that time, information and visitor services were temporarily moved to the Environmental Education Center.

The reopening comes none too soon, as another group of hunters will check in Monday and have their hunter orientation at 11 a.m. in the Visitor Center auditorium. This is the second of two public elk hunts scheduled on the refuge this sea-

son by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. As with the earlier hunt in December, 90 tags were issued, 30 bull permits and 60 cow permits.

During the elk hunt, refuge roads will be open to through-traffic only. The hunt starts a half-hour before sunrise Tuesday through Thursday, ends a half-hour after sunset Tuesday and Wednesday, and finishes up at noon Thursday.

The only area open to the public during the elk hunt is the Mount Scott Area, which includes Mount Scott, the Mount Scott Picnic Area, the Holy City and Jed Johnson and Rush lakes. Dog Run Hollow, French Lake and all of Charon's Gardens Wilderness Area and Elk Mountain will all be closed for the hunt.