

Space museum near Ashland to include 'SAC' in name again

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Get ready to say goodbye to the “Strategic Air & Space Museum.”

<<<< A worker steadies 8-foot-tall letters for a site known at the time as the Strategic Air Command Museum; it was renamed the Strategic Air & Space Museum several years after moving to Ashland.

The giant hangar complex near Ashland, with its dozens of aircraft and missiles from Offutt Air Force Base history, isn't going anywhere.

But the museum's board of directors has decided to jettison the name in favor of a new one that includes a direct reference to the Strategic Air Command, the Air Force unit that made its home at Offutt from 1948 to 1992.

Marketing Director Deb Hermann said 92 percent of the 800 people who either responded to a survey on the museum's website or filled out comment cards supported the change.

“Overwhelmingly, our feedback includes either SAC — the acronym — or Strategic Air Command” in the name, Hermann said.

One commenter wrote: “(T)he name should include the main reason the museum was constructed in the first place — to house and protect Strategic Air Command's aircraft, missiles and other related resources that played the main role in the Cold War.”

“Everybody still calls it the SAC Museum,” wrote another. “Change it back.”

The museum's origins date back to the arrival of a B-36 bomber for outdoor display at Offutt.

In 1966, the Strategic Aerospace Museum was dedicated. But in the public's mind, it was the SAC Museum because of its close proximity to the command. It was officially renamed the Strategic Air Command Museum in 1992.

With some of the aircraft deteriorating outdoors, the museum in 1998 was moved 25 miles west to a 300,000-square-foot complex just off Interstate 80 near Ashland. Three years later, the name was changed to its current one without advance notice to the public.

Museum supporters, many of whom were SAC veterans, didn't like it. They felt it loosened the museum's connection to the Air Force command and its historical significance.

“Changing the name some years back diluted all of that and, in my view, should not have happened,” wrote former museum Chairman Bill Doyle in a letter to The World-Herald. “My vote has always been to put ‘SAC’ back into the SAC Museum.”

Hermann said she and other museum officials will work with an advertising agency to come up with as many as five ideas for a new name and logo that will reflect the museum's focus on education and technology as well as its connection to SAC.

The choices will be presented to the museum's board at a meeting in June.