Planned Improvements at the Berkshire Museum
Will Preserve Structure, Protect Collection

Construction will begin May 26, 2020

[Pittsfield, MA] - Construction fencing and heavy machinery will appear on South Street next week as the Berkshire Museum begins essential renovations. Together, three capital projects will preserve the 117-year-old museum structure and protect its unique collection of fine art, historical objects, and scientific specimens for many years to come. Improvements include a modern sewer line, freight lift, and extensive waterproofing around the building’s basement level.

The lengthiest and most visible phase of construction will be the installation of a new sewer line to replace the original pipe installed when the historic institution was first built in 1903. The new plumbing will connect to the sewer main located under South Street. To make way for the new sewer line, Wally, the museum’s beloved stegosaurus, was transported in April to Louis Paul Jonas Studios in New York for refurbishment. The fiberglass dinosaur will return when work on the front of the building concludes.

Over the coming months, crews will excavate around the museum’s basement level section by section to seal the building’s foundation with a new moisture barrier that will protect the community museum’s one-of-a-kind collection.

Efforts are already underway to install a new freight lift to safely transport large objects from the museum’s existing loading dock to the basement level and second floor. Elevator doors will be installed in a second-floor gallery, allowing for easier and safer movement of large-scale objects.

The museum’s doors are currently closed as part of state-wide efforts to control the spread of COVID-19, with the organization operating online instead. When the museum
building reopens, construction is expected to have little impact on visitor experience. Temporary gallery closures will be shared in advance via the museum’s website at berkshiremuseum.org.

“Sewer lines, moisture barriers, and freight lifts might not sound like the most exciting projects, but this long overdue work sets the stage for the museum’s next hundred years,” said Berkshire Museum Executive Director Jeff Rodgers. “Once we’ve addressed the building’s infrastructure, we can turn our attention to galleries and new ways to engage our visitors. We’re excited to take these first steps toward the museum’s future.”

Allegrone Companies, based in Lenox, will lead the project as general contractor.

About the Berkshire Museum
Located at 39 South Street in downtown Pittsfield, Massachusetts, the Berkshire Museum combines art, science, and history to create thought-provoking experiences for the whole family through interactive programs, interdisciplinary exhibitions, and engaging online series. The museum building is temporarily closed to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Visit explore.berkshiremuseum.org to enjoy Berkshire Museum wherever you are.