

# Pawhuska Journal-Capital

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## Bronze Horse completes 1st project since fire

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When the building housing the Bronze Horse Foundry was gutted by fire on December 12, 2012, John Free, Jr. moved his family-owned business to the Pawhuska Armory.

Seven months later, the Bronze Horse is ready to ship its first piece from the new location – a replica of renowned sculptor Kelly Haney’s “The Guardian.”

According to Cindy Free, most castings take about six months without a mold and four months with a mold.

“We already had some of the pieces already thru the mold process,” said Free. “Most of it was ready to cast before the fire.”

Free explained a lot of their bigger molds were kept in a separate building which escaped fire damage.

The Armory appears to be working well for the Bronze Horse. Although it is very spacious, Free said they are evaluating the need to upgrade lighting in the main auditorium as well as solutions to reducing sound issues.

“The noise from grinding and pounding echoes throughout the large area,” said Free. “Although our workers wear ear plugs, we are exploring various sound-proofing options.”

Two air conditioned rooms in the back of the building serve as an office and wax work area. Currently, there are no immediate plans to rebuild the Bronze Horse.

“Once we get back on track, will reevaluate rebuilding — very costly,” Free said.

The Guardian sculpture adorns the top of the Oklahoma Capitol dome and was created by internationally-recognized artist and former Principle Chief of the Seminole Nation Enoch Kelly Haney.

The Bronze Horse’s commission is being shipped to Norman. It is one of several seven-foot replicas on display at various businesses and college campuses throughout the state. Kelly currently resides in Norman and works full-time as a sculptor.

For more information about The Guardian, visit [www.kellyhaney.com](http://www.kellyhaney.com) or call 405-627-0122.