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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 12, 2005

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DPISD plans update to district museum, asks for donations to historical collection

DEER PARK---*Who is Clyde Abshier, and why is the Deer Park stadium named for him? How many students were in Deer Park High School's first graduating class?* Deer Park ISD hopes to answer these questions and many more about Deer Park's heritage by updating the district's Historical School Museum.

Planned to coincide with DPISD's 75th anniversary, the update will consist of redesigning some of the museum display cases, gathering new items for the museum collection, and creating an updated inventory of the collection. The museum is located in the "old primary room" in the front of the building and was originally created by a volunteer committee of district employees, Deer Park graduates, retirees, and community members.

"These people gave countless hours of their time to face the monumental task of gathering hundreds of historical items and organizing them into a wonderful place for the community to celebrate its rich past," Lucas said. "The problem is that items degrade over time and need to be restored or replaced. Also, for several years, the museum was more or less neglected because the building that houses it, the Wolters Administrative Annex, was used as the alternative high school campus. It's heart-breaking that all of that hard work was ignored for a few years, but we hope to honor the original museum committee's hard work by continuing their legacy."

(More)

Lucas said there are many challenges to operating a small-town historical museum.

"The most difficult thing about maintaining a museum and keeping it up to date is most people don't consider the fact that what's happening today might be worth remembering 10 or 20 years from now," Lucas says. "For instance, no one really thinks about saving a copy of the football program for each game every year, and nobody realizes this until it's too late. You end up trying to locate or recover items after the fact, and that makes it even more difficult."

Thus, it is easy for a historical collection to quickly become out of date, a problem that the district hopes can be solved with the help of the Deer Park community. "We're asking the community---retirees, former students, current employees, former School Board members and others---to consider donating items to the historical collection," Lucas said. "There's a strong chance that people have some historical treasures in their closets."

Among the items needed for the museum are school shirts, old textbooks, letter jackets, class rings, sports or music uniforms, school spirit-related items, photographs, films, videos, or any items related to Deer Park ISD. Items of special interest might include an original copy of a valedictorian's speech, a film from the district's early years, or a scrapbook from one of the schools.

"We realize that there are probably photos, videos, films and items of that nature that people are reluctant to part with," Lucas added. "In those cases, I hope people would consider loaning them to us for a short time so that we could make high resolution scans or copies of the items."

In addition to the museum update, the district also plans to add a historical section to the district website. Interviews are also being conducted with people who had an important role in the district's history, particularly in the early years.

Lucas said there is also a need for volunteers to help organize the museum collection. “We simply need some help with creating a new inventory and sorting through the collection,” he said. To volunteer, please contact the Department of Communications at 832-668-7030 or email mlucas@dpisd.org.

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