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2012 Exhibit Redesign Project

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Dear Visitor,

Can you believe the River Valley Pioneer Museum celebrated 25 years of operation in 2011? And thanks to faithful friends like you the museum has continued to grow in many ways. However, after 25 years it is time to overhaul the heart of the museum so we are embarking on a very large, very important exhibit redesign project and we need your tax deductible, financial help.

The ultimate goal of the museum's Exhibit Redesign Project is to attract more visitors and we think the redesigned exhibits will do just that by more accurately telling the story of the Hemphill County area in an exciting way. We are especially interested in area schools utilizing the museum as a learning tool. To that end we intend to create a design that will be hands on, interactive and interesting while telling the story of Canadian and Hemphill County.

Exhibit Redesign Project Rendering

The River Valley Pioneer Museum is a local history museum and a nonprofit, 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization depending on charitable contributions from the public. Presently the museum has 177 active members and 38 life time members. The River Valley Pioneer Museum averages about 3,000 visitors annually and hosts many events throughout the year. (See attached list.) Museum visitors include guests from as far away as Kuwait, Indonesia and England, as well as United States travelers passing through on U.S. Highway 60-83.

Through generous donations from friends like you as well as prudent financial oversight by the museum board and staff, the museum has made several improvements over the past 25 years of operation.

* 1994 -The Gallery Room, a spacious addition with an attached kitchen, was opened with funding from the Malouf and Iris Charitable Lead Trust. This room is used to display the varied traveling art history exhibits as well as housing numerous fundraisers, luncheons, seminars, and social affairs held each year. This room is also rented throughout the year bringing in a valuable

source of extra income for the museum. Groups who rent this room often have their meals catered and with the attached kitchen, caterers can finish preparing and serve the meals with ease with the use of the supplied equipment.

* 2004 - Façade Renovation Project - The museum's metal building was replaced with a design that reflected the beautiful Santa Fe Reading Room that once was a prominent building in our community and the large cement parking lot was replaced with lush landscaping. Construction began in November 2005 and was completed June 2006 and the results were magnificent.

* 2008 - Julius Born Digitization Project - The museum took on the large project of digitizing over 4,000 glass and soft negatives taken by early 1900 photographer, Julius Born. The board recognized the crucial need to conserve these images and the importance of preserving the visual history of the Hemphill County area. Julius Born, who came to Canadian in 1897, opened his variety store in 1905 and operated it until his death in 1962. Born took photographs in the back of his "curiosity store" and became a master photographer of his time. These photos documented pioneers of the area and they became a visual history of the era. The purpose and end result for digitizing Born's photographs was to make the images more accessible to the public for research, genealogy and education. Once this project was completed, the images became available to the Portal of Texas History, created and maintained by the University of North Texas Libraries Digital Projects Unit. The images can be viewed and searched online at <http://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/partners/RVPM/browse>. (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/partners/RVPM/browse>.)

* 2011 - Gallery/Meeting Room – We upgraded the sound system equipment, speakers and microphones to compliment the wonderful acoustics of the room. We also installed a teleconferencing system to meet the needs of businesses that need communications of this type. The room was equipped with a pull-down screen and projector several years ago.

This brings us to the present and the reason for our request. For the past couple of years the museum board has gotten serious about committing to a major interior renovation of the museum's current exhibits and interpretation of artifacts which are in severe need of updating. Museum consultant and public historian Dr. Bill Green, of Canyon, was hired to produce a Master Plan for the River Valley Pioneer Museum. This spring, 2011, Bill compiled the ideas and input from community meetings, board meetings and the planning committee into a Master Plan. To make Bill's ideas more visual, he commissioned artist, Laura Hill, to develop an artist rendering of a portion of the new exhibit plan. (See attached color rendering).

This fall the museum board members voted to hire Bill Green as the exhibit designer and project manager of the Exhibit Redesign Project. This project will essentially be completed in two phases as well as revamping the gift shop area. The newly designed gift shop will have an old general store feel with oak flooring and a pressed tin ceiling. Preliminary improvements to ready the area for the construction of the two phases will include painting the ceiling black, installing new track lighting and constructing several new exhibit walls. These improvements will support and enhance the exhibit areas in several ways.

The plan also includes a wall mural depicting historic Canadian painted by Canadian native and

artist Laura Hill. A hands-on interaction area designated for kids and enhanced audio and video technology will be incorporated. Custom built exhibit cases showcasing the progression of Canadian and Hemphill County through industries such as ranching, railroad and petroleum will be installed. The overall look and feel of the museum will be drastically improved along with the presentation and interpretation of the artifacts and story of Hemphill County.

The museum board members are convinced that when completed, this 25th Anniversary Exhibit Redesign Project will not only attract more visitors to our museum but will more accurately tell the story of Canadian and the Hemphill County area. At the same time, the board is excited that the plans include high-tech, motivational exhibits that will fulfill the educational need of area school children. We are very confident that Bill Green will transform our museum into a sought after destination for adults and children.

To accomplish all of these much needed improvements, the River Valley Pioneer Museum has set a budget of \$600,000. To help us reach our goal, we are asking our museum friends to support us in this major but needed endeavor. Your contribution and support will be greatly appreciated and will have a major impact not only on this project but also on our community.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wright, Executive Director
River Valley Pioneer Museum Board Members

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