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CHANGES AHEAD FOR ENERGY RESEARCH PARK

Houston, December 2, 2010 – The University of Houston Energy Research Park gears up for some major renovations as they prepare to welcome students to their grounds. Petroleum Engineering will be the first program located in the UH ERP.

“The Petroleum Engineering Program is a key element of UH Energy Research Park, which is part of one of the two strategic topics (energy and medicine) in the UH Tier One initiative,” said Dr. Thomas Holley, Director of the UH Petroleum Engineering Program. “Like other programs at UH ERP, the Petroleum Engineering Program will host faculty research in support of Tier One. However unlike other programs currently at UH ERP, the Petroleum Engineering Program will be the first academic program to provide undergraduate instruction in our newly remodeled facility in Building 9A, starting in January 2011. Undergraduate instruction outside the main campus presents special challenges, but we are excited about providing a world class learning experience at the UH ERP and leading the way for other energy-related instruction.”

Construction has begun on Building 9A, the future home of the first class of 30+ students on the UH ERP campus. By Jan. 18, the facility will be complete with laboratories, classroom and offices for faculty and administration. By fall 2011, all classes and labs are anticipated to be located at the UH ERP.

“In preparation for this arrival, we are enhancing security, parking, way-finding and pedestrian circulation in the park to serve current and future students and faculty and to promote a safe, clean campus environment in line with standards on the main campus,” said Sean York, Director of Real Estate Services.

Step one is improving security through the renovation of the park’s original guard shack, currently unmanned at the main entrance of UH ERP. The current temporary security shack north of the current visitor’s lot will be removed and security
personnel will transfer to the renovated guard shack by the start of classes. A second security shack will eventually be placed at the back entrance to the park at the south end of Schlumberger Street. The intent is to control entry into the campus in order to prevent unauthorized people from entering the grounds. All visitors will now have to check in at the gate before entering. Any other vehicles entering the premises will be required to have a parking permit.

Also, signage will be placed at the entrances and throughout the park to direct visitors and students to the appropriate buildings, similar to signage found around the main campus. York expects a permanent main ID sign in place by mid-December. Also, the shuttle route and existing parking areas will see improvements in place by next fall with plans to extend the concrete drive to complete the shuttle loop and repave portions of the existing parking lots.

Building 4 is currently undergoing renovations and will eventually become the park headquarters and center for academic research. York said the roof will be replaced and walls and windows will be repaired to seal the shell of the building. Once the outside is complete, the inside of Building 4 will be built out to include conference facilities, a copy center, postal service and a new food service area with pod stations similar to those found in the University Center. Shaded by mature oak trees, UH ERP students, faculty and staff will be able enjoy their lunches in the plaza area between Buildings 4 and 5, which will receive new site furnishings including benches and tables anticipated for placement by fall 2011.

The renovations scheduled for the next year are only the first phase of development plans for the UH Energy Research Park. UH ERP is expected to become the focal point of UH energy programs with more improvements and expansions on the horizon which will further the University’s efforts to build a world class research park combining education, research and industry partnerships while promoting economic development.

About the University of Houston

The University of Houston is a comprehensive national research institution serving the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. UH serves more than 38,500 students in the nation’s fourth-largest city, located in the most ethnically and culturally diverse region of the country.