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BUILDING 1 UNDERGOES TRANSFORMATION AT ENERGY RESEARCH PARK

Houston, Nov. 9, 2012 – For motorists who drive past the University of Houston’s Energy Research Park along the Gulf Freeway, the one building they catch a glimpse of is Building 1.

With its sharp lines and angles and brick exterior, the architectural design of the facility, which sits in front of the 74-acre complex, harkens back to the early 1950s, when it was originally built by Schlumberger.

While the outside of the building looks relatively the same, the interior has undergone a remarkable renovation over the past year. The 55,000-square-foot facility was transformed, yet through it all still maintains a nostalgic feel in some places, most noticeably the front foyer area. The building also received all new windows and a new roof.

In August, the massive renovation project was completed, allowing various UH departments – including Real Estate, University Advancement, Financial Reporting and Finance – to move in. In addition, Transwestern, the property manager for ERP, moved its staff to Building 1.

"Not everybody has moved in yet. But 100 percent of the building is spoken for," said Sean York, UH Real Estate Services director.

Moving from buildings 2 and 3 to Building 1 were 51 Finance department staff, including Accounts Payable, Purchasing, Tax, Financial Computing Systems and Accounting Services.

"We are very pleased with the new space," said UH Controller Mike Glisson. "It is a nice work environment."
David Ellis, executive director of Financial Reporting, said the early-1950s architectural design gives the building a more enjoyable atmosphere in which to work.

“The architecture of that period included a lot of glass windows between the hallways and the rooms, which gives it a much brighter, more cheerful appearance inside,” said Ellis, whose department with its 11 staff members moved into the building in August after having been located in Building 2 since 1997.

Building 1 is one of 15 comprising the ERP, which was purchased by the university for $27 million in 2009. The complex was built in 1953 by Schlumberger, an oilfield services company that had moved its company headquarters to Houston 13 years earlier. By 1993, the company had moved most of its Houston operations to a new site in Sugar Land.

After Schlumberger moved out, the complex was eventually sold. UH began leasing space there until purchasing it three years ago with a bold vision to transform it into a hub of energy research and education, in which students and faculty share space with private sector partners.

Building 1 is not the first one in ERP to be overhauled.

Prior to UH purchasing the park, the Texas Diesel Testing and Research Center in Building 14 was the first to be renovated. That was followed by work on the Conoco Phillips Petroleum and Engineering Building, which was opened in January 2011. This past April, a renovation project was completed at Building 4.

Earlier this fall, extensive renovations were completed on buildings 14B and 15, which will house the Superconducting Pilot Facility and Energy Device Fabrication Lab. They will become a focal point for the research and commercialization efforts at ERP and a catalyst for future manufacturing incubator activity centered around energy device fabrication and manufacturing.

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 40,700 students in the nation’s fourth-largest city, located in the most ethnically and culturally diverse region of the country.