BUILDING 4 CONVERTED INTO CENTERPIECE OF ENERGY RESEARCH PARK

Houston, Nov. 27, 2012 – People who walk inside the front doors of Building 4 of the University of Houston's Energy Research Park are greeted by a slick, modern interior, complete with freshly painted walls and a wide-open foyer area.

The scene stands in stark contrast to what someone would expect to find inside a brick facility built nearly six decades ago.

But after an extensive remodeling of the 30,000-square-foot building – including gutting the interior – it stands ready to become another stepping stone in UH’s vision of becoming a hub of energy research and education, in which students and faculty share space with private sector partners.

Sean York, UH Real Estate Services director, said the university has spent much time and resources converting Building 4 into a facility with unlimited potential for UH’s goal.

“The building was completely overhauled. All we kept was the shell,” York said.

That work included replacing all the windows and the roof. There are no longer any clues that the second floor once housed a commissary to feed the masses of Schlumberger employees who once worked there. Instead, the second floor remains a large open shell, ready to be molded to fit the needs of whatever tenants end up calling it home.
The building is expected to be the focal point of the ERP, with its large classroom spaces and conference facilities.

It is one of 15 buildings comprising the ERP, which was purchased by the university for $27 million in 2009. The 74-acre 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.

Building 4 already is home to a Cougar Xpress Mini Mart, which opened on the ground floor in April. The first floor is also serving as the temporary home to some staff members from the Division of University Advancement until permanent space in Building 1 at the ERP is ready for them.

The building 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.

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.

A complete remodeling was completed in August on Building 1 at the front of the campus.

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.