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NEWS RELEASE

HARRIS COUNTY 1910 COURTHOUSE REDEDICATION CEREMONY AND RIBBON CUTTING

A dedication ceremony and ribbon cutting today marked the reopening of one of the county's most significant historical structures, the Harris County 1910 Courthouse. Guests and attendees were allowed to take self-guided tours of the restored courthouse following the ceremonies.

The courthouse restoration project began in 2003 with Harris County Commissioners Court's authorization for the preparation of a master preservation plan by the Harris County Public Infrastructure Department. In 2004, the plan was submitted to the Texas Historical Commission and the preservation project was approved. The commission later awarded the county a \$5 million construction grant that helped offset the county's approximately \$65 million courthouse restoration costs.

The last renovations made in 1954 created slight alterations to the building's exterior appearance, but significant changes to the courthouse's interior. The recent renovations, started in 2009, have restored the building exterior and the public spaces within the interior to their 1910 condition.

A notable restoration to the exterior includes the reconstruction of the monumental staircases that were removed when the building's main entrance was relocated to the first floor. Major exterior construction also includes the restoration of the courthouse dome and the installation of new wood-framed windows that replaced old metal-framed windows.

One of the most exceptional restorations to the courthouse's interior is the reopened rotunda. The rotunda was closed to create usable space in the building's upper levels, completely blocking the view of the courthouse's domed skylight. The center rotunda is now opened to a new shallow-domed stained glass skylight.

The First Court of Appeals moved into the 1910 Courthouse in 1957, following the legislature's requirement that Harris County provide court facilities in Houston. In 1967, after it was created by the legislature, the Fourteenth Court of Appeals also resided in the courthouse. Both courts moved out in 1983 due to overcrowding. In September, the First and the Fourteenth Courts of Appeals will once again occupy the Harris County 1910 Courthouse.