

## HOUSTON CELEBRATES 175 YEARS OF TEXAS INDEPENDENCE

**HOUSTON (January 13, 2011)** —Texas pride will reach new heights in 2011 when the Lone Star State commemorates 175 years of Texas independence. Celebrations marking the anniversary of the Texas Revolution are being held all across the state in the coming months. But it's in the Houston area where the decisive battle for Texas independence was fought and won by a brave band of soldiers at San Jacinto. Several major events are happening here that will help mark this important point in our history.

Much like the American colonists who sought independence from a tyrannical England more than a half-century earlier, those living in Texas in the early 1830s were battling against a dictator in the form of Mexican General Santa Anna. Texas formally declared its independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836. After cutting defeats by the Mexican Army at the Battle of the Alamo and Goliad, a Texas force led by General Sam Houston successfully routed the Mexican troops on April 21 and secured independence at San Jacinto, just a few miles east of present-day Houston.

"Our city's role in the history of Texas cannot be overstated," says Houston Mayor Annise Parker. "Houston once served as the capital of the new Republic, has long been a major economic nucleus and is today the largest city in the Lone Star State. Ours is a city rich in culture and heritage, eager to show it off."

Parker invites history buffs, students, families and all Texans to visit the place where it all happened 175 years ago. Events occurring this spring that coincide with the anniversary of Texas' Declaration of Independence and the Texas Revolution include:

### **"Texas Spirit" at the Houston Museum of Natural Science**

From Spanish colony to independent Republic and eventually the 28th state in the Union, Texas' rich history comes alive in this traveling exhibition being hosted at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. The exhibit opens March 6. Objects on display come from collections across the state and represent some of the most important moments in Texas' past. Visitors will get to see a pistol and pipe that belonged to famed Alamo fighter David Crockett, General Sam Houston's report on the battle of San Jacinto and even a flag that flew over that decisive battle. [more...](#)

### **San Jacinto Day Festival and Reenactment at San Jacinto Monument and Museum**

The San Jacinto Day Festival and Battle Reenactment will take place Saturday April 16 at the San Jacinto Monument and Museum on the site of the actual battleground in La Porte. Featuring a full day of music, entertainment, food and games, the highlight of course is the dramatic recreating of the battle between Sam Houston's Texian soldiers and the Mexican Army.

Stretching 570 feet into the Texas sky, the San Jacinto Monument stands as a lasting testament to those Texans who fought bravely against the Mexican Army for their people's independence. The battle is said to have lasted only 18 minutes, but it forever changed the course of history in Texas, setting the stage for the Republic of Texas and eventually statehood. Visitors to San Jacinto today can see the actual battleground where it all happened and take an elevator ride to the observation deck at the top of the monument for an awe-inspiring view. Anchored in the nearby Houston Ship Channel is the storied Battleship Texas, the only Navy battleship to have served in both world wars. [more...](#)

### **Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo**

What better way to celebrate the Texas way of life than a rodeo? More than 2 million people descend on Reliant Stadium annually for three weeks of excitement at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™, which kicks off March 1. There's something for everyone at the rodeo, including an enormous carnival and midway, barbecue cook-offs, wine tasting competitions, concerts and action-packed bull-riding. See the world's largest livestock show and cheer on the cowboys and cowgirls as they ride and rope for a piece of the \$1.4 million purse. Headliners for this year's rodeo include Miranda Lambert, Sugarland, Brad Paisley, Selena Gomez, Martina McBride and more. [more...](#)

For a real taste of historic Houston, visitors should:

**Stay** at the Alden Hotel, which was once the Sam Houston Hotel & Bar. Originally opened in 1924, the hotel garnered a reputation through the decades for impeccable service to the city's business travelers. Today's guests and visitors to the Alden can still enjoy a drink at The Sam Bar, which honors the two favorite pastimes of the General and first President of the Republic: great cocktails and socializing with colleagues. [more...](#)

**Eat** at Pizzitola's, which has been serving great barbecue since 1935. Started by Texas barbecue legend John Davis and his wife Leila as Shepherd Drive Bar-B-Q, the small eatery is one of the best places for no-frills, good barbecue. From pork ribs to brisket, everything is fired on East Texas hickory. Match that with more than 100 years of pitmaster skills in house, and you've got something to savor. Save room for the chocolate fudge cake with pecan icing. [more...](#)

**Visit** the Heritage Society's Sam Houston Park. Nestled on 10 acres of beautiful parkland in the heart of downtown Houston, the park boasts nine historic structures dating from 1823 to 1905, including several homes and St. John's Church (1891). An old mill, stream and rustic bridges and paths complete the scene. [more...](#)

For more information on what's happening in Houston this spring, log on to <http://www.visithoustontexas.com>

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