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**HOUSTON BALLET REACHES MILESTONE
IN CONSTRUCTION OF NEW \$53 MILLION CENTER FOR DANCE**

**Topping Off Ceremony Celebrates Completion of the Steel Structure for the
Largest Professional Dance Facility in the United States**

Houston, Texas – On March 10, 2010 at 11 AM, Houston Ballet will hold a topping off ceremony for its new \$53 million Center for Dance, set to open in spring 2011. A 20 foot steel beam will be placed on the west side of the 115,000 square foot, six-story Center for Dance just eight months after breaking ground in July 2009. The steel frame being constructed at 601 Preston in downtown Houston marks a significant milestone in the construction of the largest professional dance company facility in the United States.

“With the topping off ceremony for the new Center for Dance, we move a step closer to the next chapter in Houston Ballet’s history: a state-of-the-art facility for the company located in the heart of Houston’s Theater District, just across the street from Wortham Theater Center where the company performs. Moving into the Center for Dance will be a great leap forward for the company, allowing us to significantly expand our education and dance training programs,” commented Jesse H. Jones II, co-chairman of the capital campaign and a longtime trustee of Houston Ballet Foundation.

“This building is a tangible symbol of the city of Houston’s passionate commitment to the arts. And it will cement Houston’s reputation as an international center for the performing and visual arts.

“During a time of national economic recession, when the construction and architecture industries are facing major challenges, the construction of the new Center for Dance has created jobs for Houstonians. When the building is completed in 2011, over 350,000 man hours will be invested

in this project. In many ways, the construction of the Center for Dance – occurring at a time of significant financial challenge – is a symbol of the resiliency and vitality of Houston, its economy and its people.”

“The topping off ceremony is a tradition dating back centuries, originating in Scandinavia,” commented Houston Ballet Managing Director C.C. Conner. “We are pleased to honor the construction workers who have worked so diligently on this project, and are responsible for the progress thus far.”

At the ceremony, construction workers involved in the project as well as dancers, staff and patrons of Houston Ballet will have a chance to inscribe their signatures on the final steel beam before it is hoisted into place with an evergreen perched on top symbolizing growth.

The six-story building will boast nine dance studios, a black box dance laboratory that seats 200 for presentations as well as rehearsals, and artistic, administrative and support facilities for Houston Ballet and its Ben Stevenson Academy. The new facility will more than double the space that Houston Ballet has at its current home, located at 1916 West Gray in the River Oaks section of Houston, which the company renovated in 1984 and features six dance studios. The Center for Dance will become Houston Ballet’s sixth home since its founding in 1955, when it was first housed in a renovated garage at 813 Lovett Boulevard in the Montrose section of Houston.

The new structure, designed by globally-recognized architecture firm Gensler, will be the largest professional dance company facility of its kind constructed in the United States. *The Houston Chronicle* has observed that the building “could be the most exciting new architecture Houston has seen in decades.” (July 31, 2009) Art Gensler, chairman and founder of Gensler, acknowledged the importance of the project, commenting: “What a privilege it’s been to create the new home for Houston Ballet, literally opening a window through the building’s design that lets all of Houston see the beauty, talent and passion of Houston Ballet. We are thrilled to be part of this wonderful addition to downtown Houston and its Theatre District.”

Richard Maxwell is the project principal. The project manager is Lorrie Foreman of Irvine Team. The general contractor managing the construction is W.S. Bellows Construction Corporation.

The co-chairs of the ongoing capital campaign are John C. Bass, Jesse H. Jones II and Anita B. Stude. (Mrs. Stude served as co-chairman of the campaign until her death in July 2009.)

About Houston Ballet

Houston Ballet is America's fourth largest ballet company, an ensemble of 53 dancers with an annual budget of \$17.7 million and an endowment of just over \$50.7 million (as of December 31, 2009). Hailed by *The New York Times* as "one of the nation's best ballet companies," Houston Ballet has toured over the last decade to New York, London, Montreal, Hong Kong, the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and to cities large and small across the United States.

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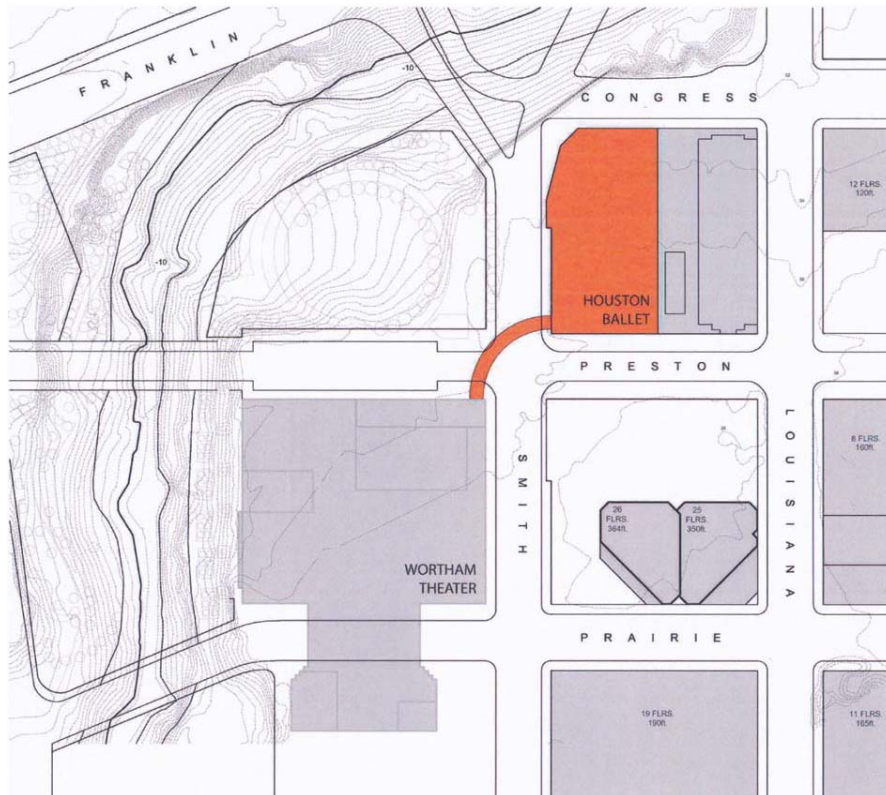
**HOUSTON BALLET'S NEW CENTER FOR DANCE
TOPPING OFF CEREMONY
FACT SHEET**

WHAT: Houston Ballet's New Center for Dance Topping Off Ceremony
Largest Professional Dance Facility in the United States

WHEN: Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at 11 AM
11:00 AM Signing of steel beam begins
11:30 AM Topping off ceremony
12:00 PM (noon) Lunch served for construction crew and media
(If you will be able to attend the lunch please RSVP to 713 535 3226)
1:00 PM Ceremony and lunch finish

WHO: Houston Ballet dancers, patrons, students and staff.
Construction crews from W.S. Bellows Construction Corporation, Gensler staff, Irvine Team staff, and the City of Houston council members involved in the project

WHERE: 601 Preston
Located in downtown Houston at the intersection of Smith and Preston Streets.



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