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Smithsonian Vietnamese Exhibit Hosted by Houston Community College

"Exit Saigon, Enter Little Saigon" Opens August 21

Houston, TX [August 6, 2008] – A groundbreaking Smithsonian exhibit devoted to the experiences of Vietnamese in America will be on display at Houston Community College from August 21 through November 30. The nationally touring exhibit, "Exit Saigon, Enter Little Saigon," uses images and narratives to tell of this vibrant ethnic community's contributions and challenges in America in the last 33 years. A special display area has been established to house the exhibit on the first floor of HCC's administrative building, 3100 Main St.

The exhibit tells of the experiences of Vietnamese arriving in America after the fall of Saigon in 1975. More than one million Vietnamese came to America, many suffered great hardships along the way. But the exhibit focuses on adaptability more than tragedy, showing how the Vietnamese have assimilated into mainstream American life while still retaining their traditional folkways and culture. It is the first Smithsonian historical exhibit dedicated to Vietnamese Americans.

First displayed at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., "Exit Saigon, Enter Little Saigon" is expected to tour 12 cities through 2010. Houston is the third stop.

In addition to the main display, the Houston exhibit will include an area devoted to the experiences of a group of Vietnamese who went through an HCC refugee program. More than 60,000 Vietnamese now live in the Houston area. Vietnamese is the third most commonly spoken language in the area behind English and Spanish, according to the Census Bureau.

"Houston Community College is honored to host the Smithsonian exhibition chronicling the growth of Vietnamese America," said Dr. Mary S. Spangler, Houston Community College Chancellor. Spangler noted that HCC takes

great pride in its long-standing role partnering with the local Vietnamese community, which began with the arrival of the first refugees in 1975.

The display will be open to the public Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Members of the press are welcome to the grand opening reception on Wednesday, August 20, 2008, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., located in the first floor lobby of 3100 Main Street. Please RSVP with Linh Tran at 713-718-5015 or email at linh.tran@hccs.edu.

"Exit Saigon, Enter Little Saigon" is "Developed by Smithsonian Institution Asian Pacific Program and organized for travel by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. The national tour has been made possible by Farmers Insurance."

For more information, please contact Gigi Do, Exhibit Chair, at 713-718-5058.

Information on the Smithsonian project can be found at www.vietam.org

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About HCC

HCC is an open-admission, public institution of higher learning whose relevance to Houston and the surrounding areas is reflected in its status as the No. 1 community college in the country for international students. The learning opportunities offered by HCC prepare individuals in our diverse communities with the essential tools for success in an increasingly international and technological society.