



Newsletter

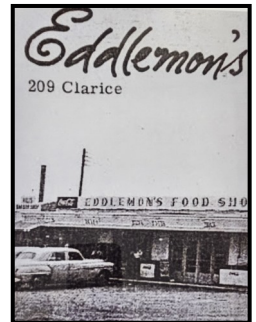
August 2026

August 20, 2026 — GPHO General Meeting

6:30 p.m. at the Grand Prairie Historical Museum

TASTY TIDBITS FROM EDDLEMON'S BY JOHNNY EDDLEMON

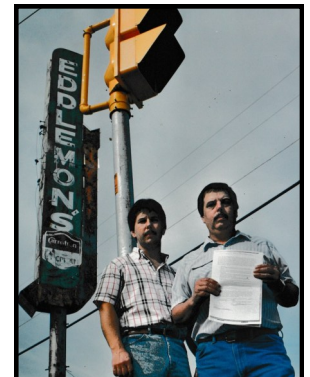
If you lived in Grand Prairie in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, especially in the Indian Hills area, you probably bought groceries and brisket at Eddlemon's Food Shop. (Is your mouth watering just thinking about it?) Established in August of 1953, Eddlemon's was located outside Grand Prairie city limits, at 105 Clarice Street, on the corner of Center and Clarice. Rebecca and Oscar Eddlemon were living about 400 miles south of Grand Prairie in Alice, Texas, where Oscar managed the Coca Cola warehouse, when they learned that Rebecca's uncle, Jack Plummer, was selling his small grocery store. So, the Eddlemon family, which included three sons (David, Joe, and Johnny) moved north to Grand Prairie.



Johnny Eddlemon, the youngest son, will share history, memories, and stories about growing up in the family business and in Grand Prairie. These tasty tidbits might include:

- David selling fireworks in the store.
- Cotton pickers stopping by on their way to pick cotton way down south in Florence Hill
- Selling blocks of ice for the construction workers developing Inglewood Estates
- Coca Cola and milk sold in returnable bottles
- Selling smokie burgers at 8 for \$1.00 with a free package of buns
- Neighboring stores including Bob's Burger & Shake and Grand Prairie Laundry

Come to listen and share your memories of the iconic Eddlemon's!



NO MEAL WILL BE SERVED AT THIS MEETING, SO RESERVATIONS ARE NOT NEEDED

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Warm regards,

Four years ago, when I joined the Grand Prairie Historical Organization, I thought I was joining a museum. I quickly discovered it was so much more. A museum isn't just photographs hanging on walls or artifacts displayed in cases. It is the keeper of our memories. It is where our stories live long after we're gone.

As I became involved with the museum, I realized something that changed my life. My children had often told me they wished I had saved more from their childhood. I hadn't understood why those little things mattered so much. Growing up, very few of my own childhood treasures were kept, so I never learned the importance of preserving them. Looking back, I now understand that those little keepsakes aren't just "things." They are pieces of our story. One afternoon, while walking through the museum, I saw an old photograph that reminded me of my grandmother. Then another exhibit brought back memories of my father. Suddenly, I realized how precious those moments were and how easily they can disappear if no one preserves them. I cried all the way home, wishing I had understood years earlier that memories are among the greatest gifts we can leave for those we love.

That day gave me a dream. I dream of our museum becoming one of the most treasured places in Grand Prairie—a place where history doesn't simply sit behind glass but comes alive. When visitors walk through our Hensley Field/LTV Aviation Exhibit, I don't just see airplanes. I see a little six-year-old girl sitting in the family car, searching the sea of parked vehicles for her daddy after work. I remember laughing as I spotted him by the way he walked and shouting, "There's Daddy!" Those are the memories that make history personal. Today, I watch visitors experience those same emotions. They stand in front of our exhibits and begin sharing stories of parents and grandparents who worked at LTV. They point to photographs and remember neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and friends. They tell their grandchildren, "I remember when..."

Our newest exhibit, **TOY STORY**, is another beautiful example. Thanks to the generous donation from Doris Kettlehut and Jan Barrett, visitors can see toys dating back to the 1800s through the 1970s. One of my favorite pieces is a collection of some of the earliest clay marbles ever made. Almost every visitor finds something that sparks a memory of childhood—a toy they once owned, a game they played, or a special Christmas morning they had nearly forgotten. **That is the power of history.**

History isn't about living in the past. It's about remembering who we are, where we came from, and the people who shaped our lives. In a world where older buildings are often replaced with shopping centers or apartment complexes, we risk losing more than brick and mortar—we risk losing our stories. The Grand Prairie Historical Organization is committed to making sure those stories are never forgotten. But we cannot do it alone.

This year's North Texas Giving Day gives each of us the opportunity to invest in preserving the history of our community for future generations. Our museum has grown beyond the space we have, and our dreams are even bigger. With your support, we can continue creating exhibits that educate, inspire, and help families reconnect with their own memories. Every gift—large or small—makes a difference. If our museum has ever brought back a special memory, taught you something new, or made you proud of Grand Prairie's rich history, I ask you to consider giving.

Please visit the **North Texas Giving Day** website and search for **Grand Prairie Historical Organization** to view our wish list and make your donation. Together, we can preserve the stories of yesterday so they will inspire the generations of tomorrow.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for believing in our mission and for helping us keep Grand Prairie's history alive.

Kay Dunbar



2025-2026 GPPO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Remembering Our Members

This quarter we have lost five members. We remember them here and send condolences to their families and friends.

CHARLES "CHUCK" CURTIS BANCROFT, JR.

November 19, 1954 – June 21, 2026

GPHO life member, Charles Curtis Bancroft, Jr., known as Chuck, passed away at the age of 71, in Grand Prairie. Born in Mississippi, Chuck was the eldest son of Charles Curtis (Sr.) and Lena Mae (Richardson) Bancroft. He attended Grand Prairie schools, graduating from GPHS in 1972. In his early years in Grand Prairie, Chuck played youth baseball, often under the coaching of his father who was a legendary figure in local baseball. At the age of 17, armed with a 93-mph fastball, Chuck signed with the Kansas City Royals. His love of the Royals didn't interfere with his passion for the Texas Rangers which he shared with his father and brothers. Holding season tickets since the 1980s, a Bancroft has been present at every home Rangers game for over 40 years. Chuck was also a talented dancer, even earning a trip to California to tap-dance on national television. He was also a gifted guitar player and popular DJ. Besides spending time on all these interests, Chuck still found time to serve in leadership roles with his brothers and sisters-in-law in the family business, Bancroft Transportation, which his parents, Charles and Lena, founded in 1969. A proud father and grandfather, Chuck raised seven children: Charles III, Amber, Cody, Dustin, Megan, Madison, and Mackenzie. He also cherished his 12 grandchildren.



GRETA FAYE BERRY BECKLER

February 12, 1934 – May 5, 2026



GPHO life member Greta Faye Beckler passed away peacefully on May 5, 2026, at Midtowne Assisted Living in Midlothian, Texas, surrounded by the love and memories of the family and friends who cherished her deeply. She was 92 years old. Greta was born in Bellvue, Texas, to Wilbur Jasper and Emmadean Yowell Berry. Named after the glamorous actress Greta Garbo by her mother, Greta carried both grace and quiet strength throughout her life. She spent her early childhood in Bowie, Texas, before her family moved to Grand Prairie, where they built a happy life together in their home on Hill Street. She graduated from Grand Prairie High School, where she was a talented majorette and won several pageants, reflecting the poise and beauty she carried naturally. On June 7, 1952, Greta married the love of her life, Oakley Kimball Beckler. They welcomed two sons, Bryan in 1953 and Bradley in 1955, who remained among her greatest joys and proudest accomplishments. Greta's work ethic and sense of responsibility were admired by all who knew her. Over the years, she worked at Vought Aircraft (LVT) in Grand Prairie, assisted her mother Emmadean in real estate, partnered alongside Kim custom residential construction during the 1970s and 1980s, and eventually retired from the Tarantula Trains. No matter the role, Greta approached life with diligence, organization, and integrity.

HELEN BROOKS CHENNAULT

July 21, 1931 – June 3, 2026

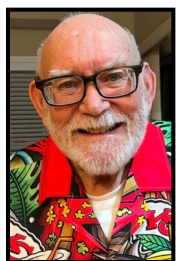
GPHO life member, Helen Brooks Chennault, passed away on June 3, 2026, nearing the age of 95. Born in Dallas in 1931, she was the first child of Ernie and Ila Brooks. After graduating from Woodrow Wilson High School at the age of 16, Helen proceeded to earn a diploma as a Registered Nurse as the youngest student in her nursing class. After working a few years in the ER and surgical departments at Methodist Hospital, she was hand-picked by Dr. H.C. Henderson, Jr. to be the nurse in his obstetrics and gynecology practice, where she worked for 43 years. In 1951, while on a blind date, Helen met Tom Chennault, only Tom was on a date with the other girl! Tom and Helen married the next year just before Tom was drafted and remained married for 55 years, until Tom's death in 2007. They raised two children in Grand Prairie – Thomas Wayne and Lisa Ann. Her two grandsons (Marcus and Brad) and six great-grandchildren brought Helen a lot of joy and pride.



Remembering Our Members

WILLIAM "SAGE" H. SENGBUSH

September 7, 1951 – July 5, 2026



William "Sage" H. Sengbush, 74 died peacefully on July 5th, 2026, in Lee's Summit, Missouri. He was born on September 7th, 1951, in Dallas, Texas to Raymond and Earlene Sengbush. He loved growing up with his older sister Lynn and younger brother Larry, climbing the pecan tree in their front yard, playing in the mud and riding their bikes to school. He became a tennis star in high school and college and was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame for tennis at East Texas State University at Commerce. He was also a college cheerleader which led him to his wife, Linda Rae Chappell. Linda hired Sage to work for her cheerleading company in 1974. They were married a year later, and their earthly love story lasted nearly 51 years. Sage and Linda had two children, Megan and Ray. He held many titles including coach, mentor, salesman, friend, brother, husband and dad. Sage was known to his friends as kindhearted with a positive attitude, supportive, sweet and funny with an ornery, mischievous smile. He was passionate about cars and sports and was fiercely dedicated to his family.

SHIRLEY FRANCES REED WILKINS

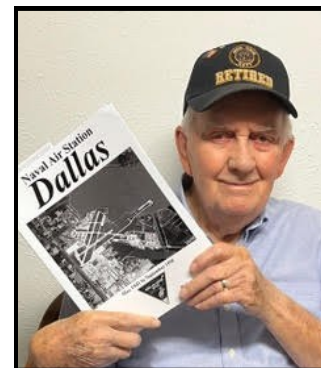
May 25, 1936 – May 11, 2026

Shirley Frances Reed Wilkins died on May 11, 2026, just two weeks shy of her 90th birthday. The only child of Roy and Maggie Reed, she was born at BoBo Hospital in Arlington, but grew up in Grand Prairie and lived there all her life, except for a very short time in California. She couldn't understand why anyone would want to live anywhere but her beloved Grand Prairie. She remained lifelong friends with many of her classmates from her GPHS Class of 1954. In 1955, she married Billy Wilkins and together they built a life and family during nearly 52 years of marriage. They raised three children: Nikki, Wayne, and Lisa. Shirley and Billy shared a love of travel and enjoyed many adventures together as they traveled throughout the world. She was a valued GPHO member who generously shared her memories and photos, including stories about her father's grocery store, Reed Groceries, in downtown Grand Prairie.



Member News

GPHO member, **WALTER R. WAGENER**, has written a history/documentary book titled *Naval Air Station Dallas*. The book covers the history of the Dallas Naval Air Station, from its commissioning on May 15, 1941, and the anticipation of building a Navy aviation training site, to the lowering of its command flag on September 26, 1998 -- then the move west to become Naval Air Station, Fort Worth. Originally, Dallas' station would train pilots destined for combat throughout the world during World War II and after became a site to maintain flying skills of these pilots in the Naval Reserve program. Walter retired from the Navy after 23 years of service as a journalist/public affairs specialist whose interest in military history led him to write the book. *Naval Air Station Dallas* can be purchased online through Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble.com and Walmart.com.



Remembering Ed Hemphill



Edward Rhea Hemphill passed away on May 16, 2026. He is remembered particularly as a major force in his beloved Dalworth community. He is also remembered for making history in Grand Prairie as the second African-American to serve on the Grand Prairie City Council (following in the footsteps of Jim Kellum who served his first City Council term starting in 1979).

Ed Hemphill was born on June 30, 1951, in Tucson where his family was living in 1950, according to the U.S. Census. His parents were Joe Willie Hemphill and Hazel Cleaster Bright. Two siblings preceded his birth, a sister named Patricia and a brother named Joe Willie, Jr. While living in Tucson, Joe Willie, Sr. (and his brother Lewis) worked as service station attendants. When he returned to Dalworth, he became a master mechanic and owned his own mechanic business in Dalworth.

Grand Prairie was still a segregated town when Ed was born. He started school at Dalworth Elementary, but by the time he reached high school, the schools were integrated, and Ed attended Grand Prairie High School. He made a name for himself in football and basketball at GPHS, serving as captain of the football team his senior year and achieving All-District status. Growing up, Charley Taylor was his role model.



Ed's love of his community was always front and center. As he described it, "It was the most beautiful living environment you can imagine. The belief that it takes a village to raise a child was

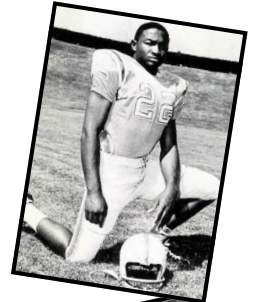
very much a part of the two-square mile neighborhood. Children had strict guidelines. Ministers lived there and walked the streets. . . . You had millionaires and people struggling to get by living there. There were professionals — doctors, dentists, teachers and others — and businesses on every street. I remember grocery stores, convenience stores, barber shops." Often he would mention how Dalworth was known for being the first Black community in the U.S. to have a swimming pool and park for Blacks in the early 1950s — Tyre Park.

Starting his leadership career early, Ed served as President of the Dalworth Youth Council when he was 12 years old. The organization had been organized by a couple of former Dallas Cowboys (Pettis Norman and Frank Clarke). Later he served on several Grand Prairie city boards and commissions. Finally, in 1990, he decided to enter politics and ran for the City Council. He was elected in his first try at public office. He served two terms on the Grand Prairie City Council before being defeated in a runoff in 1994. Ed later served as the Receiving Manager at Lone Star Park, the horse racetrack he helped Grand Prairie win as a City Councilperson.

Ed Hemphill was an iconic leader in Grand Prairie, and especially in his Dalworth community. He believed it was important to preserve the history and stories of Dalworth and its residents. He thought there was much to learn from the experiences of those who came before and understood that communities are strengthened when history is remembered and shared. GPHO appreciated the time he spent at the Museum sharing stories and photos.

In honor of his service in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam war, Edward Rhea Hemphill was laid to rest at the Dallas-Ft. Worth National Cemetery.

There is more to read about Ed Hemphill in Warren Landrum's The History and Perspective of the African-American Experience in Grand Prairie, Texas. Much of the above information was found



G.H. TURNER PARK

On this past Independence Day, G.H. Turner Park turned 80 years old. The park also was recently recognized by the Grand Prairie Historical Organization as Significant Landmark No. 71.

In 1945, the City of Grand Prairie purchased 46 acres in the northern part of Grand Prairie for the purpose of building a park. This park, originally known as City Park, is the oldest city park in Grand Prairie. G.H. "Harry" Turner, who was elected mayor of Grand Prairie in 1923 and served as mayor until 1949, had suggested the town lay out a five- or ten-year plan that would include a city park. The proposed \$25,000 park included a 10-acre lake, a concrete swimming pool, a nine-hole golf course, tennis courts, croquet lawn, and a bandstand.



On Independence Day of 1946, Grand Prairie residents celebrated the opening of the park with a square dance, bathing beauty contest, fiddlers' competition, and ball games. The \$100,000 (not the proposed \$25,000) project included a new swimming pool. The "municipal playground" was called City Park.



In 1949, Mayor G.H. Turner decided that "Twenty-four years is long enough for one man to be mayor." So, he did not seek re-election when his 12th term ended in April 1949. In June 1954, the Grand Prairie City Commission changed the name of City Park to G.H. Turner Park,

honoring the Grand Prairie banker and former mayor. A bronze plaque was dedicated in G.H. Turner Park on April 10, 1955, prior to the scheduled Easter Egg Hunt that Turner held annually in the park.



Over the years, Turner Park has hosted a wide variety of activities.

Two crowd favorites were the swimming pool and the baseball field. Thousands of Grand Prairie children swam and played ball for decades in Turner Park. The baseball field was known as "a launching pad" for hitters with "dimensions of 355 feet to center, 310 feet down the lines, and 340 in the alleys."

In 1969, the Grand Prairie Woman's Building opened in Turner Park. The structure was "built, landscaped, carpeted, and draped" by the City of Grand Prairie. Although the city has retained ownership, it is leased and operated by the Grand Prairie Woman's Club. Two structures were added to the park for the Texas Sesquicentennial in 1986. The Grand Prairie Soroptimists raised



funds to build a gazebo in Turner Park. Also in 1986, the Parks Department constructed a giant "concrete Texas map" on a sloping hill at the northeast corner of the park. The map featured individually sawed concrete counties put together in a puzzle-like way.

Turner Park has been the host of political rallies and road rallies, Easter sunrise pageant plays and Vietnam Veterans Against the War antiwar simulations, picknickers and playground players. You name it and it's probably taken place in the park - except, in 1955, the city Commissioners turned down a request by promoter Bill Perryman to use Turner Park as a site for professional wrestling bouts!

DO YOU KNOW???

Do YOU know . . . That a Grand Prairie woman may have been the inspiration for the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders?

Essie Mae Cash grew up in Grand Prairie. She was the daughter of Lorrayne Cash and lived with her brother and sisters at 301 E. Main. Although Essie Mae dropped out of school before attending GPHS, her brother Durward and sister Elizabeth can be found in GPHS yearbooks and are probably known by some of you. Durward was a member of Calvary Baptist Church and married Sherry Lynette Richardson there in 1960.

What is particularly ironic about that last statement is that Essie Mae Cash was best known for her alter ego — Bubbles Cash — who was a very well-known stripper in Dallas. Essie Mae acquired her nickname when she was an infant, before she could talk, because she could blow mouth bubbles on command. She acquired her noticeable “attributes” a little later. In the fall of 1967, married and with a three-year-old daughter at home, she was working in a small club called the Calves Bar near the Dallas Cowboy practice field when a “bunch of players, led by [Don] Meredith, showed up for a round of beers.” Discovering that Bubbles had never attended a Dallas Cowboys game, Jerry Rhome, the backup quarterback, volunteered some tickets to the Falcons game in November. On November 5th, the Dallas Cowboys were playing the Atlanta Falcons at the Cotton Bowl. Midway through the first quarter, the referees suddenly stopped the game. Bubbles Cash was making a spectacular entrance down the aisle at the 50 yard line, in a VERY short skirt, carrying two tubes of cotton candy. When guys in the crowd started applauding, she did a sexy little dance, which brought more attention and applause, eventually reaching the field — and, more importantly, Dandy Don, who promptly called a timeout. She became the unofficial team mascot — it helped that the Cowboys won the game — and tickets were made available for all the home games and even some away games. Attendance at the games (and at the clubs she worked) increased.



The Cowboys general manager, Tex Schramm, noticed. Recognizing the potential of the attention and sex appeal Bubbles Cash was producing, he supposedly said “We could sell this!” The cheer squad for the Cowboys at the time was composed of high school boys and girls called the CowBelles and Beaux. First the boys were dropped, and then the squad was disbanded. Within a few years, the new Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders, complete with hot pants, halter tops, and white leathery go-go boots, were born.



Beyond her strip club career, Bubbles owned Top Cash Gold & Silver pawnshop, acted in several B movies, became a country-western and blues singer and guitar player, and ran for Texas governor TWICE. Bubbles is still alive and well in Fort Worth though her stripping days are over.

Coming Events

August

20 – GPHO General Meeting – 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. – Grand Prairie Historical Museum

September

7 – **LABOR DAY** – Grand Prairie Historical Museum Closed

17 – North Texas Giving Day (Donate at: <https://www.northtexasgivingday.org/organization/Gphotx>)

October

31 – Street 'n Treat – 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. – City Hall, 300 W. Main, Grand Prairie

November

11 – Veteran's Day – Flag Retirement Ceremony – Grand Prairie Historical Museum

19 – GPHO General Meeting – 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Grand Prairie Historical Museum

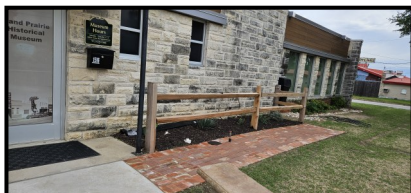
26 – THANKSGIVING – Grand Prairie Historical Museum Closed

27 – THANKSGIVING FRIDAY – Grand Prairie Historical Museum Closed



UPDATE ON “WALKING THROUGH HISTORY” PROJECT

Thank you to all our friends who have ordered bricks for our fundraiser. The first phase of bricks have been installed in a beautiful walkway on the north side of the Grand Prairie Historical Museum. The memorial bricks are framed by historic bricks “rescued” by Ruthe Jackson from the demolition of the Spikes Brothers Broom Factory (which was located about two blocks east of the Museum). The brick pathway runs in front of a new split-rail fence with a beautiful garden of native



plants. (Thanks go out to Gary Dunbar and our intern Steliyan Nedelchev for planting the garden.)

It's not too late to participate in the Commemorative Brick



Walkway Project which raises funds to support the Grand Prairie Historical Museum. By purchasing a personalized commemorative brick, you can showcase your civic pride, honor a loved one, or celebrate a special memory. Since GPHO is a nonprofit organization,

every brick purchased helps us preserve the past and inspire future generations. Bricks are available in two sizes, as shown to the left. Pick up a brochure that describes the entire project at the museum. **Contact James Barnes at 214-458-1840** if you have any questions.



8 X 8

\$200

4 X

\$100

FOUND IN THE MUSEUM

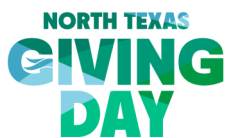
TOY STORY

Our newest exhibit, **TOY STORY**, highlights a wide-ranging display of vintage toys. Thanks to the generous donations from Doris Kettlehut and Jan Barrett, visitors can see toys dating back to the 1800s through the 1970s. The vintage Knickerbocker Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls bring back memories for many of us who either had one of the dolls or made them for our children or grandchildren. The dolls in the museum were given to Jan Barrett's grandchildren by Margaret Brea Logan, the great-great-great-granddaughter of Margaret Breman, who was the wife of John Neely Bryan, the founder of Dallas. Studying the display you can learn about historic toys like the Peg Top and corn husk dolls and look at a collection of some of the earliest clay marbles ever made. Don't miss the Erector set and the

"knucklebones" (jacks to a Baby Boomer) in both their bone form and their metal jacks form. Almost every visitor can find something that sparks a memory of childhood—a toy they once owned, a game they played, or a special Christmas morning they had nearly forgotten. **That is the power of history.**



NORTH TEXAS GIVING DAY—SEPTEMBER 17



North Texas Giving Day, one of our most important opportunities to raise funds for the future of our museum is just around the corner on September 17. We are asking each of you to consider making a donation—no matter the size.

This year, our wish list includes two exciting and meaningful projects:

- **Grand Prairie State Bank Hamilton Brothers Robbery Exhibit** – an interactive experience bringing this historic story to life (approx. \$8,000)
- **Rebuilding the Goodwin Cabin** – a treasured piece of early Grand Prairie history, restored and placed beside our museum (approx. \$100,000–\$120,000)

These are big goals—but so is our belief in this organization and in each of you. Every dollar truly makes a difference. Together, we can create something lasting for our community. Just imagine the day when you walk up to the museum and see the Goodwin Cabin standing proudly once again—because you helped make it happen.

Starting August 27, you can donate at: <https://www.northtexasgivingday.org/organization/Gphotx>.

GOODWIN CABIN PHOTO OP



First unveiled at the City of Grand Prairie's Star-Spangled Prairie Party on July 4th, GPHO now has a large banner featuring the Goodwin Cabin that resided in Cottonwood Park until it was destroyed by arson. Now, visitors to the Grand Prairie Historical Museum can dress up in period costumes and have their photos taken in front of the cabin at the museum.



Drop by anytime the museum is open for a free fun photo op!

MUSEUM INFORMATION

HOURS

Monday – Saturday: 1 – 4 p.m.

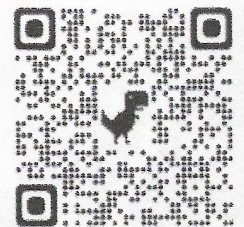
LOCATION

**1516 W. Main Street
Grand Prairie, TX 75050**

The Museum will be closed on major holidays (when the City of Grand Prairie closes).
If you would like a private tour of the museum, please email museum@gphotx.org or call (972) 639-3388

Two ways to access the GPHO Website!
QR Code for GPHO Website

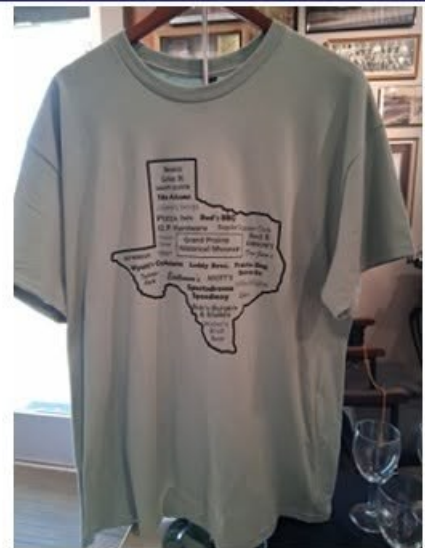
~ Position the camera so the QR code is in frame.
When GPHOTX.org appears, tap it and you will be taken to the GPHO Website



Or simply click here gphotx.org and go to the link!



Rebecca (Mama)
Eddlemon
enjoying her job
at Eddlemon's
Food Shop



T-shirts \$20 at the GPHO Museum. Some color choices. Several sizes.

**Start a conversation when you wear one of our
t-shirts. Be the FIRST one on your block to wear a
GPHO t-shirt !!**

GRAND PRAIRIE HISTORICAL ORGANIZATION
1516 W. MAIN ST.
GRAND PRAIRIE, TX 75050

Mission Statement

The mission of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization (GPHO) is to preserve and share the history of Grand Prairie, Texas, by researching, collecting, properly preserving, and archiving items that tell the history of Grand Prairie and its citizens. The Organization will share the history with others through avenues throughout the city by committed volunteers who will provide a standard of excellence in support of the organization.

Help the Grand Prairie Historical Organization preserve the PAST by joining for the FUTURE.

