

AgriLife time capsule to be opened Monday after 25 years underground

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Twenty-five years ago, a time capsule was buried near the magnolia tree next to Hopkins County Courthouse and, in ceremonies at noon Monday, it will be opened.

The opening of the time capsule coincides with the 100th anniversary of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, formerly called Texas Agriculture Extension Service, according to Johanna Hicks.

“Monday is going to be a very special day. We are going to be unveiling a time capsule that was buried on the 75th anniversary of of Extension,” she said. “At that time, it was stated that on the 100th anniversary of Extension, it would be unveiled and opened, and we are going to do that at noon on Monday here at the courthouse. We really don't know what to expect when we open it.

“It is a very special time for Extension across the country,” Hicks continued. “There aren't a whole lot of agencies that survive 100 years, so that tells you a little about the importance of Extension, what we do, what our goals are and it's to bring the university to the community where we live through our workshops, our programs, seminars and events.”

The time capsule opening will bring a number of special people to Sulphur Springs including Hurley Miller, the district extension administrator from Dallas.

“Some of the people who were here 25 years ago are going to also be here and it will be kind of fun to see,” said Hopkins County Judge Robert Newsom. “Elton Stewart, the one who brought the photo to us said, 'I never thought I'd live this long and I didn't plan to be here.' His wife found the picture in the newspaper and said 'Hey, it's 100 years and ya'll need to unbury this time capsule' that nobody even remembered had even been put under until we started talking about it.”

Finding the time capsule was not as easy as might have been expected, and a week's worth of searching was required to find the location.

“We've been looking for almost a week for that time capsule in various places, have done some digging out here and a lot of poking around the magnolia tree,” Newsom said. “We had even heard that it might be even further into what used to be the parking lot.”

Newsom said everyone had just about given up on finding the time capsule until Wednesday afternoon when courthouse maintenance worker Jimmy Duncan found it among the roots of the historic tree.

What is in the time capsule?

“Oh my, that's the million dollar question,” Hicks said. “I really, honestly don't know, but it will be a nice surprise for all of us.”

“We really don't know what's in it,” the judge said. “But, we do believe we've got the right capsule.”

At noon on Monday, just off the south steps of the courthouse, the mystery will be solved when the time capsule is opened in celebration of 100 years of AgriLife Extension Service.