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**TRAVELING EXHIBITION, *TEXAS' FIRST RADIO STATION: WRR*  
*RADIO CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION* MOVES TO THE BATH HOUSE  
CULTURAL CENTER IN DALLAS  
ON VIEW JULY 31<sup>st</sup> - AUGUST 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**DALLAS, TX** – As part of the centennial celebration as the first licensed radio station in Texas (and second in the country), WRR is celebrating a century of service to North Texas listeners with a special exhibition, *Texas' First Radio Station: WRR Radio Centennial Celebration*. Curated in partnership with Dallas Municipal Archives, this compelling display will highlight the central position of WRR in the Dallas and North

Texas community – from its origins in public safety as fire and police dispatch, to its many decades of music programming as an AM station, to its stature today as the premier Classical FM station for a 100-mile radius. The display features a collection of historical images from the past ten decades, plus rare photos of the many local and international luminaries who have served as advocates for the station. “This isn't just a celebration of one radio station,” says WRR General Manager and Program Director Mike Oakes. “This is a commemoration of the launch of an entire industry, which not only survives, but thrives, a century on. That said, there is so much history that exists with this one very special radio station, from its very beginnings. WRR was launched as a public service entity, and that commitment carries through to this day.”

An exhibition promising to delight both fans of broadcast history as well as arts lovers. *Texas' First Radio Station: WRR Radio Centennial Celebration* is on display from July 31<sup>st</sup> through August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at the Bath House Cultural Center, 521 E. Lawther Dr. Dallas, TX 75218. The Bath House Cultural Center is the fourth installation of the traveling exhibition, following runs at NorthPark Center, the Hall of State, and Dallas Love Field airport.

### **WRR'S STORY:**

WRR was the first licensed broadcast station in Texas and one of the nation's five inaugural stations. Operated by the City of Dallas Office of Arts and Culture, WRR is an integral component of the City of Dallas' commitment to providing access to arts opportunities to its residents, as well as to the nearly eight million residents of North Texas.

WRR was the brainchild of inventor Henry Garrett, a Police and Fire Signal Superintendent for the City of Dallas who envisioned radio as the modern way for firefighters in the field to communicate. Licensed August 5, 1921, the station was originally housed in the Dallas Fire Department and touted as the latest in firefighter communications. When firemen had no blazing fires to battle, however, they blazed the broadcast trail by playing music or telling jokes. A few years after the station began operation, the Fire Department needed a substantial investment in new equipment to serve the rapidly growing city. They solicited donations from local businesses and urged listeners to patronize those establishments. A year later, in 1926, the station started marketing advertising commercials. On-air antics during emergency downtimes sold local residents on a new genre of entertainment. Citizens began purchasing crystal radio sets in order to tune in. By 1926, WRR had moved to the Adolphus Hotel in downtown Dallas. WRR made subsequent moves to the Jefferson Hotel and Hilton Hotel before settling at its present home on the State Fairgrounds in the late 1930s. The station debuted on the FM spectrum in 1948 and continued to broadcast at AM and FM frequencies until selling its AM station 30 years later. WRR became an all-classical station in 1964.

Today, WRR is the only commercial classical music format radio station in Texas and is the oldest same-owner station in the U.S. With a tower in Cedar Hill, the 100,000-watt station's listening area spans 100 miles in any direction. WRR continues to build on its legacy of innovation and firsts and is attracting a new breed of internet listeners via streaming at [wrr101.com](http://wrr101.com). In 2006, WRR was the first station in Texas to broadcast an all-digital format for improved sonic fidelity.

WRR does not operate at the expense of taxpayers but as an “enterprise” of the City of Dallas Office of Arts and Culture, generating revenue through advertising and sponsorships to cover its expenses. Revenue exceeding expenses has been invested in capital needs of the station and a small portion has been transferred through the years to the OAC’s Arts Endowment to support small and mid-size arts organizations.

**ABOUT DALLAS MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES:**

Established in 1985, the Dallas Municipal Archives contains over 2000 cubic feet of departmental records in a variety of forms and formats, including ledgers, manuscripts and typescripts, maps, photographs, microforms, and printed materials. They maintain thousands of permanently valuable documents, maps, and architectural plans reflecting the actions of every aspect of Dallas government. As a division of the City Secretary’s Office, the Archives is also responsible for the preservation microfilming of the City Secretary’s council action files, which contain the originals of all City ordinances and resolutions, meeting minutes, agenda, and support documentation. Among Dallas Municipal Archives’ many collections are the Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow Gang materials of the Dallas Police Department, the John F. Kennedy/Dallas Police Department records relating to the assassination of President Kennedy, the earliest extant City of Dallas Charter, and over a quarter-million images documenting the growth and public services of the City of Dallas.

## **ABOUT THE BATH HOUSE CULTURAL CENTER:**

The Bath House Cultural Center houses a 116-seat theater, two gallery spaces, the White Rock Lake Museum, and a few multipurpose spaces. Diversity flourishes as visual and performing artists from an array of backgrounds find a welcoming venue for their work. Located at 521 E. Lawther Dr. in Dallas, the center's energetic atmosphere and programming creates a hotbed for the nurturing of new work, and an exciting place where artists and audiences meet to explore and enjoy the life force that is the arts. Consistently rated as one of the Top Attractions in the DFW Metroplex, the Bath House's energetic atmosphere and diverse programming create a hotbed for the nurturing of new work and an exciting place where artists and audiences meet. Built in 1930 on what were then the rural shores of White Rock Lake, the "Old Bath House" was one of the first uses of Art Deco architecture in the southwest. The building provided lockers, changing rooms, rentable swimsuits and concessions for the thousands of people that drove from all over North Texas to swim in the lake.

The Bath House remained a social and recreational hot spot for over two decades but was forced to close in 1953 when swimming in White Rock Lake was discontinued. The majestic building sat vacant until 1978 when, urged and supported by a dedicated group of neighborhood arts activists, the City of Dallas announced plans to restore the building. In August of 1981, the citizens of East Dallas celebrated the birth of the City's first neighborhood cultural center.

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