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Press Release: PRE-TOUR

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Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Celebrating Sports in American Communities Coming to Bryan, Texas

Baseball. Soccer. Hockey. Bowling. Kickball. Surfing. People around the country are drawn to compete in these sports and many others. Still more gather on the sidelines to cheer for their favorite athletes and teams. Nowhere do Americans more intimately connect to sports than in their hometowns. The Brazos Valley African American Museum, in cooperation with Texas State Historical Association, will celebrate this connection as it hosts “Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America,” a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program. “Hometown Teams” will be on view May 5, 2018 through June 9, 2018.

Brazos Valley African American Museum and the surrounding community has been expressly chosen by the Texas State Historical Association to host “Hometown Teams” as part of the Museum on Main Street program—a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. The exhibition will tour 7 communities in Texas from Marshall through Claude; an itinerary is attached, and a short video about the exhibition can be viewed at [YouTube Exhibition Trailer](#).

“Hometown Teams” will capture the stories that unfold on the neighborhood fields and courts, and the underdog heroics, larger-than-life legends, fierce rivalries and gut-wrenching defeats. For more than 100 years, sports have reflected the trials and triumphs of the American experience and helped shape the national character. Whether it is professional sports or those played on the collegiate or scholastic level, amateur sports or sports played by kids on the local playground, sports are everywhere in America.

“We are very pleased to be able to bring ‘Hometown Teams’ to our area,” said Crystal Spruill Carter, Director. “It allows us the opportunity to explore this fascinating aspect of our own region’s sports history and we hope that it will inspire many to become even more involved in the cultural life of our community.”

“Allowing *all* of our state’s residents to have access to the cultural resources of our nation’s premiere museum is a priority of the Texas State Historical Association,” said Stephen S. Cure, Chief Operating Officer. “With this special tour, we are pleased to be working with Brazos Valley African American Museum and Brazos Valley community to help develop local exhibitions and public programs to compliment the Smithsonian exhibition.” Such programming includes oral history interviews completed by Navasota and Bryan students. Partnerships with libraries in Brenham, Bryan, Caldwell, College Station, and Navasota to showcase Hometown Teams theme-related books pulled from the collection and an Author Series event with Texas sports book author. The local exhibition will focus on pre-integration and post-integration hometown sports history and culture in the Brazos Valley. The VIP Exhibition Opening Reception is Friday, May 4, 2018, 5:30 - 7:00 pm. This invitation event will offer a preview of the Smithsonian Museum on Main Street exhibition and is open to elected officials, press and media, sponsors, and exhibit participants. The Grand Opening Tailgate held on Saturday, May 5, 2018, 3:00 – 5:00pm is a free event open to the public. Wear your favorite team apparel and show your team spirit.



Museum on Main Street invites the public to share their local sports stories through the “Stories from Main Street” website at www.storiesfrommainstreet.org or through the free mobile app available from the Mac App Store or the Google Play Store. Both platforms record and map the location reflected in the submission and will accept written and audio stories as well as videos and photos. Selected submitted stories to “Stories from Main Street” will be featured on the website and app. The archived stories will serve as a searchable record of the unique experiences of life in American small towns. Each story can be searched via location or by topic.

“Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America” is part of Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils across the nation, and local host institutions. To learn more about *Hometown Teams* and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit www.museumonmainstreet.org.

Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress. Hometown Teams has been made possible in Bryan, Texas by the Texas State Historical Association and in part through Hotel Tax Revenue funded from the City of College Station and the City of Bryan through the Arts Council. Local support provided by Lone Star Storage, Shannon’s Cafe, FastSigns, Copy Corner, and Lamar Advertising.

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 60 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. For exhibition description and tour schedules, visit www.sites.si.edu.

The Brazos Valley African American Museum is the first establishment of its kind to promote the history of African American citizens in the Brazos Valley. The mission of the museum is to explore, develop, preserve, and present the cultural history and heritage of African Americans.

Admission Hours: Tuesday through Friday from 1PM to 5PM. Saturday from 10AM to 4PM.

Admission Fees: Adults \$5; Senior Citizens \$4; Students \$2; Children 5 and under are Free; Groups of 8 or more \$3

For more information about the Brazos Valley African American Museum please visit www.bvaam.org
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