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By Sue Hagan, Marketing & Communications manager

Preservation Parks' historic farm needs you!

Do you remember gallon-jug butter churns, Victrolas, canning jars with zinc lids, and clothing made from printed feed sacks? Do you OWN these and other items from the 1930's and 40's? If so, your treasures from bygone days can become part of Preservation Parks' newest venture – Gallant Historic Farm.

Farming dominated as a way of life in most of Delaware County until only the most recent decades, when subdivisions began cropping up and replacing farm communities. As part of Preservation Parks' mission to preserve cultural history as well as natural history, the Park District is building an historic 1930s-40's farmstead, at Gallant Farm Preserve in Troy Township.

Gallant Historic Farm – a farmhouse museum, barn and barnyard, demonstration crop fields and orchard, and other features of a typical family farm – will recognize the contributions of agriculture to the success of Delaware County and will serve as a tool to educate about the history of agriculture in the United States.

The farmhouse is under construction; it and the barn are slated to open sometime in early 2012. Preservation Parks is planning displays, activities for all ages, and "first-person" interpreters posing as members of a farm family of the era.

Displays and activities will alternate between the 1930's – when the Great Depression was affecting farm families and practices, and the 1940's – the era of World War II and Victory Gardens.

Meanwhile, Preservation Parks is gathering authentic furniture, tools, toys, equipment and accessories – everything a 1930's-40's family would use to outfit a farmstead. Do you have an old Sears catalogue from either decade? How about farm journals, newspapers, books and magazines? We're looking for all those and more. A complete list is posted on our website, www.preservationparks.com, along with information on how to donate.

We plan to recognize donations by entering them in an old-fashioned ledger, which will be on display in the farmhouse. Large donations might warrant more extensive recognition, and all contributions are deductible, as allowed by law.

Maybe what you have to give is your time. Gallant Historic Farm will open up an entirely new category of volunteer opportunities. We need docents who are willing to take on the persona of a farm family member from 70-80 years ago. There will be opportunities to lead demonstrations – from canning produce and churning butter, to plowing and making hay. Crop fields will need to be cared for, and family gardens planted and harvested.

Preservation Parks' historic farm will provide a window into farming days gone by, and help current and future generations understand a part of their cultural heritage.

For more information on how to become involved with the Gallant Historic Farm – through donations of cherished household items or your time – please call 740-524-8600, ext. 1 or 2.