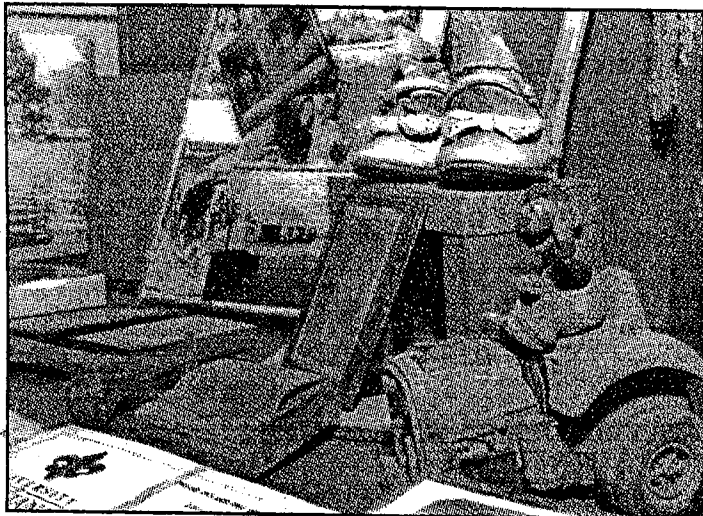


Wanted: storm's artifacts



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A display with items salvaged from a home destroyed by Hurricane Rita surrounded by photographs of the flooding greeted visitors from the Louisiana State Museum at the Acadian Museum in Erath.

Erath museum to help tell Rita's story



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Warren Perrin, left, describes items salvaged from a home in Erath destroyed by Hurricane Rita to Greg Lambousy, director of collections of the Louisiana State Museum, Wendy Talley, a volunteer with the state museum, and Ron Miguez, background, head of operations at the Acadian Museum of Erath.

BY CHRISTI LANDRY
THE DAILY IBERIAN

ERATH — Last year, hurricanes Katrina and Rita blew through South Louisiana, forever leaving a mark on its people and its history. That history will be explored in a new museum exhibit that includes items from Erath.

A group of representatives from the Louisiana State Museum toured the Acadian Museum Tuesday afternoon to take a look at artifacts from the storm.

"We realized, just like everyone else, that this was a major event in the history of Louisiana," said Greg Lambousy, director of collections for the Louisiana State Museum.

The Louisiana State Museum is working to compile a traveling museum exhibit that offers others around the country a candid look inside the damage and chaos victims of the storm suffered.

"We needed to collect artifacts and documentation of both storms. We knew that at some point an exhibit would grow out of it. Our primary concern is to collect information and artifacts from the storm," Lambousy said.

"We're investigating sources for artifacts from this

area."

The mark of Rita was especially felt locally when Delcambre and the town of Erath flooded. Homes and businesses were lost, but lives were spared.

For the people of Erath, the memory of Rita is all too fresh, in a town where homes are raised significantly and you can still spot the spray-painted markings left on homes cleared by rescue personnel.

In the aftermath of Rita, the country was wrapping its mind around Katrina. Many complained Rita's devastation often was forgotten.

Warren Perrin, a member of the advisory committee working on the exhibit, said it is gratifying the country will get a chance to learn about Rita's devastation.

"I think that it shows a lot of intellectual honesty on the part of the board that they saw fit to include Rita in this exhibit and not neglect it as so many other entities have," said Perrin.

Perrin said the exhibit will travel around the country and will return to the Louisiana State Museum where it will be a permanent exhibit.

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ARTIFACTS: *Opening in 2008*

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According to Lambousy, the exhibit should open in early 2008.

"It's a very interesting project, and we're at the early stages of seeing where we'll go with it," he said.

Coincidentally, Lambousy was in Acadiana when Rita hit last September.

"Actually I was in Lafayette when Rita hit, so I was around when it was happening. There was great devastation, and that story needs to be told," he said.

If anyone has any artifacts he believes have a particularly important story that should be included in the exhibit, call Lambousy at (504) 599-1946.