

SECOND FRONT

INSIDE

■ Markets 4B

Temple Daily Telegram

Bell County Museum preparing for more visitors

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BELTON — Look for the Bell County Museum to be more popular than ever this year as it welcomes new exhibits and finds different ways to invite people to visit.

In an annual report during Commissioners Court on Monday, museum director Stephanie Turnham said nearly 2,000 more people

visited the museum last year. Factors behind the increase, according to Ms. Turnham, include billboards that have been placed on Interstate 35 and a revamped Web site.

A new bronze monument titled "Up the Chisholm Trail" will be installed in the front courtyard of the museum this year. Although the monument is not in place yet, county officials that have seen components of the

monument say it will draw people off the street and into the museum.

A new advertising campaign for cable television also is expected to increase regional interest. Ms. Turnham said later this year commercials promoting the museum would air on HGTV, the History Channel and the Weather Channel.

There also are plans to bring increased content and

functionality to the museum's new Web site. By the end of the year, podcasts of the historic walking tour of downtown Belton and Chisholm Trail Monument should be available.

Right now, visitors to the museum Web site may see items available for purchase at the museum store, but there is no system in place yet to purchase those items online. Ms. Turnham said

that would change this year when a Pay-Pal system is instituted for the museum store.

Other things to look forward to this year at the museum include a new archeology exhibit, a weddings and romantic traditions exhibit set to open on Valentine's Day, a Plains Indians exhibit in August and the Bell County Toy Story in November.