

DILLSBORO, N.C. — The American Museum of the House Cat is opening April 1 near Dillsboro.

Harold Sims, a retired biology professor at Western North Carolina in Cullowhee, started collecting items related to the house cat long before opening the [Catman2](#) shelter in Cullowhee. His mission is to display his collection in a museum where the items can be shared and enjoyed by cat lovers, and a place where everyone can learn more about the house cat. Sims' collection, of more than 30 years, contains: fine art, art glass, antique cat toys, some going back to the 1890s, cat advertising used to attract people to purchase all kinds of things, and more.

The museum will be an educational institution where visitors will learn the history of the house cat, its place of origin and migration all over the world, and will show how the cat has interacted with man throughout the ages. The museum would be enjoyable as well.

The location of the museum is the Old School House Antique Mall, a local landmark for more than 20 years, on U.S. 441 south of Dillsboro. The museum will occupy two large rooms attached to the antique sales area and accessed through one of two entrances.

There will be a small admission fee with proceeds given to the Catman2 shelter,, which Sims built and has been involved with for the past 20 years.

"There are many house cat museums throughout the world, but only one other house cat museum, now, in America," Sims said. "The only other cat museum is in northern Ohio."

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