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Preserve America Stewards to Honor Volunteer Efforts

May 12, 2008—Washington, D.C.—At the Preserve America Presidential Awards ceremony today, Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady and Honorary Chair of Preserve America, announced the initiation of a new program: Preserve America Stewards, which will honor exemplary volunteer efforts at historic resources around the country.

In Mrs. Bush's announcement, she noted the program will recognize programs at the state, tribal, local, or regional level that have demonstrated a successful use of volunteer time and commitment in order to help care for our cultural heritage.

Potential Preserve America Stewards programs apply to be recognized at the national level using an application form and guidance materials made available through the Preserve America Web site (www.preserveamerica.gov). The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and other partner agencies implement this program on behalf of the White House.

Recognized organizations and agencies will receive a certificate of recognition as well as a letter of congratulations signed by Mrs. Bush, similar to the existing Preserve America Community recognition program. The organizations and agencies will also be listed in an online directory, with links to their own Web sites, contact information, and information for potentially interested volunteers about getting involved.

In addition to the certificate and letter from the White House, benefits of recognition and designation as a Preserve America Steward organization or program will include the following:

- Listing in a joint Preserve America/Take Pride in America national database of volunteer heritage resource stewardship opportunities, which provides an opportunity for public attention as well as a means to recruit additional volunteers;
- Use of the Preserve America logo in public outreach and promotional activities;
- Enhanced access to existing technical assistance resources that may be helpful in the development, management, and ongoing support of a local volunteer stewardship program;
- Periodic selection in a "Program Highlights" feature on the Preserve America and Take Pride in America Web sites, which contain brief summaries, news, and particularly innovative or creative features of listed volunteer stewardship programs; and
- Consideration for further national recognition through existing annual volunteer service awards sponsored by the federal government through Take Pride in America and USA Freedom Corps.

Based on available resources, benefits of such recognition in the future may also include:

- Networking and information sharing support;
- Financial assistance, and additional technical assistance through training opportunities and publications; and

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- Eligibility for other national achievement awards.

To be designated, applicants must demonstrate that their programs:

- Encourage individuals, families, non-governmental organizations, and businesses to get involved in preserving and promoting our heritage in a direct and tangible way;
- Fill a significant need in heritage preservation and education through the use of volunteers of all backgrounds, levels of commitment, and abilities; and
- Demonstrate innovative and creative use of volunteer assistance in areas such as youth involvement, volunteer training, public education, and public/private partnerships.