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Mrs. Laura Bush Announces First 2007 Preserve America Grant Recipients, New Communities

WASHINGTON, D.C.— In a ceremony on Capitol Hill today, Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States and Honorary Chair of Preserve America, announced the first 43 Preserve America Grants for 2007 totaling nearly \$2.6 million and acknowledged 20 new Preserve America Communities that have brought the national total to 501 in all 50 states and one U.S. territory. Mrs. Bush commended the efforts of two important preservation initiatives by announcing the “Preserve America and Save America’s Treasures Act.”

“President Bush and I appreciate the broad, bipartisan support Congress has shown for both of these initiatives. This proposed act—the ‘Preserve America and Save America’s Treasures Act’—will improve our government’s ability to protect America’s historic places, objects, and collections for many years to come,” Mrs. Bush said. “President Bush and I thank you for your interest in this important work.”

Projects in a total of 25 states across the U.S. received Preserve America Grant funds. The grants provide funds on a matching basis to assist Preserve America Communities with marketing, planning, and educational efforts associated with protection and appropriate use of community heritage assets. A second round of 2007 grants totaling \$2.4 million is expected to be announced in early autumn.

Plattsmouth, Nebraska, is the most recent and the 501st Preserve America Community in the nation and also carries the distinction of being the first such designation in Nebraska. The initiative now has at least one Preserve America Community in every state, plus one in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The other 19 recent community designations recognized today were (alphabetically, by state): San Juan Bautista, California; Harlem, Georgia; Coon Rapids, Iowa; Wichita, Kansas; Franklin, Kentucky; Crowley, Louisiana; Lafayette, Louisiana; Huron Township, Michigan; Liberty, Missouri; Owego, New York; Salem, Oregon; Easton, Pennsylvania; Rio Grande City, Texas; Shiner, Texas; Fairmont, West Virginia; Lodi, Wisconsin; Mazomanie, Wisconsin; Stoughton, Wisconsin; and Whitewater, Wisconsin.

The event, held in the Caucus Room of the Cannon House Office Building, was hosted by the Congressional Historic Preservation Caucus, whose co-chairs are Rep. Brad Miller of North Carolina and Rep. Michael Turner of Ohio. Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne and Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation John L. Nau, III accompanied Mrs. Bush at the event. The Department of the Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation are two of the key federal agencies that partner with the White House on the Preserve America initiative.

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Preserve America is an interagency initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy the country's priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the initiative include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of communities.

More information, including a complete list of grant recipients, criteria and application forms for various initiative programs, can be found at www.PreserveAmerica.gov.