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First Lady Designates Five New Preserve America Communities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama has signed and sent designation letters to five new Preserve America Communities in five states – Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maryland and Texas – bringing the nationwide total to 887.

“Preserve America Communities are committed to preserving their past by using their heritage to build a better future,” said Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, chairman of the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). “It is good news for the nation when communities demonstrate that they want to enjoy and share the economic, educational, environmental and sustainability benefits preservation provides, while creating more vibrant and desirable places to live, work and visit.”

The newly designated communities, listed alphabetically by state, are the following:

- Arizona – Tucson
- Colorado – Windsor
- Florida – West Palm Beach
- Maryland – Howard County
- Texas – Colorado City

With this most recent group of designations, Arizona now has 12 Preserve America Communities; Colorado has 30; Florida has 24; Maryland has 16; and Texas has 75.

The program recognizes a select group of communities that use their heritage resources in sustainable ways and share the myriad benefits of historic preservation with residents and visitors.

Preserve America Communities, great places to live, visit and explore, are located in all 50 states and several overseas U.S. territories. A full list of Preserve America Communities, along with profiles and contact information, can be found at www.preserveamerica.gov/PACommunities.html.

Applications from prospective new Preserve America Communities are accepted quarterly; the next deadlines for submission are March 1, 2013, and June 1, 2013. Preserve America is administered by the ACHP with assistance from the U.S. Department of the Interior. For more information, including community designation criteria and application forms, see www.preserveamerica.gov/communities.html.

Editor's Note: Because full community profiles may not yet be available on the Web site at the time of designation, the following information regarding the newly designated communities is being provided.

Background Highlights About the Newest Preserve America Communities

Tucson, Arizona, is one of the longest continually inhabited places in the United States. As early as 10,000 B.C., indigenous people lived and thrived in the Tucson Basin. The Mission San Xavier del Bac was established by Jesuit missionaries in 1700, and in 1775 an inspector for the Spanish Crown established a new frontier outpost, later called Tucson, to protect the Mission and support an overland stage route between New Spain and California. The area was acquired by the United States from Mexico

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in the 1854 Gadsden Purchase, and statehood followed in 1912. Railroads, mining, the University of Arizona, military aviation facilities and tourism all contributed to Tucson's growth over the years. One recent preservation success focused on historic mid-century roadside architecture and neon signage, and included restoring several signs, producing a neon sign driving guide and developing a Historic Landmark Sign Ordinance, incentivizing the preservation of other significant historic signs.

Windsor, Colorado, incorporated in 1890, is located in the heart of northern Colorado between the mountains and the plains. Rich alluvial soil supported extensive wheat production and, with the advent of ditch irrigation, sugar beets. Booming sugar beet cultivation attracted many German-from-Russia families, and brought a period of wealth and growth to the community. Historic buildings from that era contribute to the town's charm and quality of life. An annual event called "Octoberfest" calls special attention to unique Volga German traditions, including the Dutch Hop dance. Windsor is also an active participant in the Cache La Poudre Heritage Alliance and helped produce a 2011 guidebook to the National Heritage Area. The Town of Windsor Museum manages five historic buildings important to Windsor's past and interprets local history through exhibits and outreach to educators, including resources and curricula tied to state standards.

West Palm Beach, Florida, originated as a workers' community and business district for Palm Beach. In 1892, Henry Flagler, a wealthy industrialist, arrived to survey the land for the expansion of his Florida East Coast Railroad. Impressed by the beauty of his surroundings, he envisioned a resort community for wealthy northern industrialists. Flagler knew that his endeavor could not succeed without workers, and so he founded the Town of West Palm Beach across Lake Worth in 1893. The 1920s land boom increased property values fivefold, and the population skyrocketed. Two enormous hurricanes in the late '20s and the Great Depression brought economic decline, but New Deal relief programs and postwar prosperity rejuvenated the community. Today, the city boasts 16 locally designated historic districts, nine of which are also on the National Register of Historic Places, and a restored 1916 courthouse serves as home to the Palm Beach County Historical Society. An innovative recent project is adaptively reusing a 1925 Mediterranean revival house as the city's Employee and Family Health Center, providing economic stimulus to the downtown.

Howard County, Maryland, was created in 1851 and for many years was predominantly agricultural. The development of the planned community of Columbia in the 1960s was the beginning of a rapid transformation into a suburban housing and job center in easy commuting distance to both Washington, D.C. and Baltimore. The county seat, Ellicott City, was founded in 1772 and boasts a charming main street and historic district. Howard County is home to Doughoregan Manor, the large colonial plantation in the family of Charles Carroll, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, since the 1700s. Savage Mill, which operated as a textile mill from 1822 until 1947, is now home to restaurants, shops and special events. Transportation associated resources include the 1853 Thomas Viaduct, the first curved stone-arch bridge in the United States, and the Ellicott City Station, the original terminus of the B&O Railroad. Howard's Antique Farm Machinery Club interprets the county's agricultural way of life through the Living Farm Heritage Museum and participatory seasonal events. An original one-room schoolhouse has recently been added and opened to the public.

Colorado City, Texas, has its origins in the tents and dugouts of cattlemen who arrived in the 1870s. Speculation over the route the Texas & Pacific Railway might take through West Texas brought a handful of pioneers and merchants to the area. With the arrival of the railroad in 1881 businesses sprang up almost overnight, and the town became the first boom town in West Texas. When organized in 1882, Colorado was the first town between Weatherford and El Paso. The discovery of oil in 1920 added to the prosperity brought by cattle and cotton. Today the city's historic assets, including the 1899 Colorado City Opera House, cater to the local community and visitors from all over the world. The Opera House is home to the C-City Opry and the West Texas Steel Guitar Association, and its successful rehabilitation for

contemporary use has been a catalyst for a growing historic preservation movement in the community. A recently completed inventory of historic buildings downtown and a newly adopted Heritage Preservation Ordinance help manage the city's heritage resources. Colorado City is featured on the Texas Plains Trail and its Main Street Program has revived an annual event known as Frontier Days.