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Mrs. Laura Bush Announces New Preserve America Community Designations, Presidential Awards

MOBILE, AL – Mrs. Laura Bush today announced details of two new key components of the Administration’s *Preserve America* initiative: the *Preserve America* Community designation and *Preserve America* Presidential Awards.

"*Preserve America* promotes cultural and natural preservation and encourages greater appreciation of our national treasures - from monuments and buildings to landscapes and main streets. President Bush and I want every American, especially our children, to discover and learn about our nation's heritage, a heritage our parents and grandparents bestowed upon us and that we continue to build upon. Mobile is a great example of a community that is using its past to build a better future," Mrs. Bush said.

Representatives of agencies that are partners in the White House initiative accompanied Mrs. Bush. They included the Department of the Interior, represented by Secretary Gale Norton, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, represented by Chairman John L. Nau, III.

“The Interior Department is happy to take a leading role in support of the *Preserve America* initiative. This important White House program empowers citizens and local areas to work in partnership to protect the artifacts and historic sites that define us as a nation,” Interior Secretary Norton said. “*Preserve America* is also an essential element to promote historic preservation and heritage tourism in communities across the country.”

The announcement was made at the historic Old City Hall in Mobile, a National Historic Landmark dating to 1857. The structure today is home to the Museum of Mobile, a marvelous example of appropriate adaptive reuse, but in the past it was both the City Hall on the upper floor and the Southern Market of Mobile on the lower floor, where vendors sold meat, fish, vegetables, and fruit. It also played a role in the city’s military history.

“Old City Hall’s history demonstrates public-private partnerships similar to those we encourage among modern day Americans. Public-private partnerships today preserve our heritage as an economic and cultural foundation for our future,” said John L. Nau, III, chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. “I would like to challenge communities throughout our great country to enhance their heritage tourism efforts by seeking *Preserve America* Community designation for their towns and cities, and by nominating outstanding preservation and development efforts for the new *Preserve America* Presidential Award.”

The Department of Commerce is also a partner in the *Preserve America* initiative through its Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants program.

More information on *Preserve America*, including criteria, nomination, and application forms for the awards unveiled by Mrs. Bush today, can be found at www.PreserveAmerica.gov. The information can also be accessed at the White House, Department of Interior, Department of Commerce, and ACHP web sites.

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