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Preserving America's Heritage

ACHP Delivers Preserve America Summit Recommendations to President and First Lady

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) has published findings and recommendations for the future of the federal government's historic preservation efforts based on the national Preserve America Summit held in New Orleans, Louisiana, in October 2006, and presented them to the White House.

John L. Nau, III, ACHP chairman, said the Preserve America Summit Report has been delivered to President and Mrs. Laura Bush, and the federal government is beginning to implement the recommendations derived from the panels convened before and during the Summit last year on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. Mrs. Bush, honorary chair of Preserve America, opened and participated in the Summit. Almost 450 experts took part in the 11 panels formed to consider the nation's heritage preservation successes in the past and take stock of what steps to take next.

“The National Historic Preservation Act was created at the grassroots level to preserve our heritage and benefit present and future generations,” Nau said. “Today we realize more fully the value and benefits of historic preservation to the vitality and quality of our lives, our nation, and all our diverse communities. The recommendations resulting from the Preserve America Summit will help us better guide our efforts to more wisely and broadly share the cultural, educational, and economic benefits of preservation.”

The recommendations endorsed by the ACHP and submitted to the President include:

- 1) Create a comprehensive inventory of historic properties through a multi-year plan that expands current inventories and makes them more compatible and accessible.
- 2) Promote cultural diversity in the identification of historic properties by evaluating the National Register of Historic Places for its inclusiveness and encouraging local, state, and tribal governments to evaluate their own inventories.
- 3) Respond to disasters by forming a technical advisory committee to develop guidance, a plan for dissemination and training, and emergency and mitigation strategies consistent with the Department of Homeland Security's National Response Plan.
- 4) Address security needs by developing guidance, including guidance on all-hazards risk assessment.
- 5) Conserve cultural collections by pursuing cost-effective collaboration between the historic preservation community and the broader cultural heritage community, including support for the Institute of Museum and Library Service's "Connecting to Collections" initiative.
- 6) Promote innovation by creating a clearinghouse through the National Park Service National Center for Preservation Technology and Training to disseminate information in innovative technologies and encourage their use.
- 7) Measure and share preservation's benefits by developing consistent ways to measure direct and indirect impacts (particularly economic) and by pursuing and promoting necessary research.

- 8) Provide more technical assistance to local communities to promote historic preservation and heritage tourism, and explore the concept of a Preserve America Community agent or similar mechanism to work more actively with local communities.
- 9) Increase synergy between the development community and public sector partners by implementing the recommendations of the National Park System Advisory Board Committee on the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit and by seeking ways to expand use of federal financial assistance programs for historic preservation.
- 10) Enhance heritage education by developing a communication strategy for providing information to the educational community about Web sites, curriculum guides, and other outreach products that promote heritage education.
- 11) Engage youth in historic preservation by promoting programs that involve them in hands-on preservation activities and through the possible establishment of an ongoing youth summit as part of the Preserve America initiative.
- 12) Optimize U.S. participation in the international preservation arena by improving information exchange and facilitating U.S. participation in international preservation activities.
- 13) Explore improvements to the program structure of the federal preservation program through creation of an independent review panel.

The entire Preserve America Summit Report and other information regarding the initiative are available at www.preserveamerica.gov.

About the ACHP: An independent federal agency, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of our nation's historic resources, and advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. It also provides a forum for influencing federal activities, programs, and policies that affect historic properties. In addition, the ACHP has a key role in carrying out the Administration's Preserve America initiative.

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