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Preserve America awards grant to RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission for business plans for RI historic sites

July 16, 2008 (Providence, RI) – The RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (“RIHPHC”), the state agency for historical preservation and heritage programs, has received a Preserve America matching grant for \$35,434 to conduct a Business Planning Project to improve business practices for historic sites in Rhode Island. The RIHPHC will partner with Preserve Rhode Island (“PRI”), the statewide non-profit for historic preservation, to complete this project that will benefit the Historic Sites Coalition of Rhode Island (“HSCRI”), a voluntary and free network of stewards of historic sites that are open to the public. In 2007, PRI developed the HSCRI to encourage discussion about common challenges and solutions, support cross-promotion, and provide interactive workshops to advance the sustainability of Rhode Island's historic structures and unique places.

The partnership will complete the three-part Business Planning Project with four graduate business school summer interns in summer 2009. Interns will first complete business plans for four volunteer historic sites and then use those plans to develop a template business plan that will be available to HSCRI participants. Finally, interns will explore various ways historic sites might reorganize themselves to become more sustainable, including: networking, affiliation, partnership, and even merger. After the Business Planning Project is complete a facilitated workshop will be held in the fall where the three components of the project will be presented to the HSCRI.

About the HSCRI

As of May 2008, forty-five historic sites from around the state have joined the HSCRI, including sites ranging from lighthouses, to house museums, to mills, to historical and preservation society headquarters, to a blacksmith shop, and a local library. As a new program, the HSCRI has begun to gain momentum with the creation of a historic sites coalition listserv, the completion of a workshop entitled “Connect, Provoke, Inspire: Enhance visitor experience and capture your fair share of the tour market!”, and with our upcoming event “Thresholds: Step Inside History” a free statewide open house, in which twenty-four members are participating on Saturday, May 10th from 12:00-3:00 pm.

About Preserve America

Preserve America is a White House initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our nation’s heritage. The Preserve America matching grant program provides planning funds to designated Preserve America Communities to support preservation efforts through heritage tourism, education and historic preservation planning. In this round, forty-five Preserve America grants were awarded in twenty-five states totaling \$2.9 million. Preserve America grant projects have increased the country’s 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 our communities.

For more information please contact Preservation Rhode Island at 401.272.5101.

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