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### **Five New *Preserve America* Communities Designated by First Lady Laura Bush**

DENVER, CO—Five new Colorado *Preserve America* communities designated by Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States and Honorary Chair of *Preserve America*, were honored today at the annual conference of Colorado Preservation, Inc.

Cripple Creek, Georgetown, Glenwood Springs, Lake City, and Park County are the most recent *Preserve America* communities in Colorado. They join Fort Collins, Greeley, Pueblo, Silverton and Steamboat Springs, which had been previously designated and recognized since the program began in January 2004.

Officials from Cripple Creek, Glenwood Springs, Lake City and Park County received certificates signed by Mrs. Bush notifying them that their cities are now *Preserve America* communities. Georgetown was officially designated in August 2005 and had already received its certificate, but city officials were on hand to celebrate its status with the rest of the new class of Colorado honorees.

The Honorable Mark Rey, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture, presented the certificates to the Colorado *Preserve America* community officials on behalf of Mrs. Bush. He was joined by Ann Alexander Pritzlaff, Conference Coordinator of Colorado Preservation, Inc., and citizen member of the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), which helps administer the *Preserve America* effort.

“There are significant economic, educational, and cultural benefits that historic preservation, through efforts such as heritage tourism, bring to a community,” Rey said. “Sustainable preservation is not a cost for maintaining the past, it is an investment in building the future. These communities are leaders in this trend and have created a powerful positive example for others.”

The *Preserve America* initiative is a White House effort to encourage and support community efforts for the preservation and enjoyment of America’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. Designees receive national recognition for their efforts. Benefits include use of the *Preserve America* logo, listing on a government web-based directory to showcase preservation and heritage tourism efforts, eligibility for special *Preserve America* grants, and special funding opportunities offered by various government agency programs.

As of February 6, 2006, there were 352 designated *Preserve America* communities in 46 states. The next quarterly deadline for applications to become a *Preserve America* Community is March 1, 2006. For more information, including brief profiles of the 10 Colorado communities designated to date, application forms, and procedures, please visit [www.PreserveAmerica.gov](http://www.PreserveAmerica.gov).

The ACHP, Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, and Department of Housing and Urban Development partner to administer the *Preserve America* initiative on behalf of the Office of the First Lady.

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## **Colorado Preserve America Communities, Add 1**

**Cripple Creek**, population 650, was the center of finance, politics, and entertainment for a major gold mining district on the southwest side of Pikes Peak in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Young Bob Womack in 1891 made the first great strike on his claim, which he sold for \$500, never dreaming that more than \$350 million in gold ultimately would come from the area. Within two years Cripple Creek's population was 18,000. Although the boom ended in 1904, some mining continued when prices and circumstances made the effort worthwhile. More than 500 mines in the Cripple Creek Mining District have produced 21 million ounces of gold, surpassing the production of the California and Alaska gold rushes combined. Buildings were rebuilt with brick after a fire in 1896; most of the remaining historic structures date from this period. An intensive survey in 1994 identified and evaluated over 300 historic commercial and residential structures and other resources. Located at an elevation of 9,395 feet, and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1963, visitors to Cripple Creek discover that it is a peak historic preservation experience.

**Georgetown**, population 1,088, was first settled by gold and silver prospectors and incorporated in 1868. In 1884, the Georgetown Loop was constructed, a narrow gauge rail line linking Georgetown with the nearby community of Silver Plume. During the 1880s and through the early 1900s, the area's spectacular scenery made Georgetown and the Georgetown Loop a center for tourism railroad excursions. The town's fortunes began to wane with the advent of the automobile. The Georgetown Loop was dismantled in 1938. Then the mines closed in the 1940s. In subsequent decades, new emphasis on the community's heritage assets has reinvigorated tourism. The Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966, and Georgetown passed the state's first historic preservation/design review ordinance in 1970. In 2003, the new Gateway Visitor Center opened at the Georgetown exit from the interstate and greeted more than 230,000 visitors in its first year.

**Glenwood Springs**, population 7,736, is on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains at the confluence of the Colorado and the Roaring Fork rivers. Glenwood Springs was incorporated in 1885. Home of the largest outdoor mineral hot springs pool in the world, the area has long attracted visitors. Ute Indians used the hot springs they called Yampah as a place of healing. Resort facilities built in the 1880s became internationally renowned. The elegant 1893 Hotel Colorado, a copy of the Medici Palace in Italy, served as the "Western White House" for President Theodore Roosevelt and his cabinet in 1905. Glenwood Springs was one of the first hydroelectrically lighted cities in the world in 1886, having electricity even before New York City. Railroad service, hotels and saloons, and a diversified economy helped the town continue to grow when other mining communities faced tough times. Some colorful Western characters have lived in Glenwood Springs, including "Doc" Holliday, famous for the shootout at the O.K. Corral. Glenwood Springs has been actively preserving its history and promoting heritage tourism for more than forty years.

**Lake City**, population 382, is located on the eastern side of the San Juan Mountains in southwestern Colorado. The county seat town originated as one of the more isolated of the major 19<sup>th</sup> century Colorado silver camps, and was named for nearby Lake San Cristobal. Prospecting began around 1871. The Denver & Rio Grande railroad's arrival in 1889 facilitated development. Until the ore boom ran out, prosperous Lake City supported two banks, two breweries, seven saloons, and the first church and newspaper on Colorado's Western Slope. Today visitors can explore the Victorian charm of downtown's large historic district containing more than 75 buildings. The County Historical Society offers guided walking tours in summer, and the Hinsdale County Museum offers exhibits on the trial of the notorious gourmand Alfred Packer as well as the area's mining history, plus a furnished 1870s-era Victorian home. With the cooperation of property owners, interpretive signage has been placed at 17 locations in the historic district. Hikers can also explore deserted cabins and entire ghost towns that dot the hills above town.

## **Colorado Preserve America Communities, Add 2**

**Park County**, population 14,523, was one of Colorado's original counties when established in 1861. In its center is a lush valley known as South Park. The mountain men who hunted and trapped South Park during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century were the first Europeans to capitalize on the area's resources. Then came prospectors following the discovery of gold in 1860. Numerous settlements quickly sprang up but later cycles of boom and bust left several as ghost towns. Ranchers came to the grassy plains of South Park with herds of cattle and sheep. The railroad arrived in 1878 bringing tourists, and several hotels and resorts developed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Recreation and heritage tourism remain important industries today. Park County developed a series of driving tours, as well as a walking tour of Fairplay, the county seat. Efforts are currently underway to pursue designation of South Park as a National Heritage Area.

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