

Colorado -- Preserve America Community
Designations Presentation
“Building on the Past” – Ninth Annual Saving Places Conference
Denver, Colorado
Feb. 10, 2006

[Remarks for Ann Pritzlaff]

Thank you. Once again, it is an honor to participate in today’s luncheon with such a distinguished panel of guest speakers. My thanks to all of you who have helped make this conference such a success.

We turn to the Bush Administration’s *Preserve America* initiative. Our conference theme “Building on the Past” certainly captures the essence of *Preserve America*, whose motto is “Explore and Enjoy Our Heritage.” President and Mrs. Bush want every American to learn about our nation’s heritage and to enjoy our national treasures, and literally build on our collective past. By recognizing and promoting a better appreciation for our history while using it to help improve our quality of life, we construct a better future for all.

Preserve America is about preservation with a purpose, with goals firmly based in local and regional pride but also in economic

reality. As a member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, appointed by the President, I have been privileged to participate in the development of *Preserve America*.

Colorado and other states with large rural areas, with spectacular natural and cultural resources, with outstanding recreation and travel opportunities, are especially well-situated to profit from another rapidly growing trend – heritage tourism.

Through *Preserve America* we continue to gain a greater understanding of the benefits of historic preservation, as well as the rich cultural diversity of our great Nation – and we underscore the lesson that sustainable historic preservation is not a cost for “building on” the past. It is an investment in building the future.

Colorado’s participation is a key component of the *Preserve America* initiative – *Preserve America* Community designation is evidence that communities value their heritage and understand the importance of historic preservation. I am pleased to say that five more Colorado communities have recently been designated as *Preserve America* communities. This brings the total in Colorado to 10 out of the 352 total communities and neighborhoods recognized from 47 states since the program

began in 2003. Several more Colorado communities have also applied and their applications are being processed.

Today, it is my honor to help present the five newest Colorado *Preserve America* communities with their certificates of designation signed by Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States and honorary chair of *Preserve America*.

As I say a few words about each community, I would ask its representatives to come forward and receive their certificate from Undersecretary of Agriculture Mark Rey.

Here to accept the Cripple Creek certificate of designation are

[Slowly go through five Power Point slides of Cripple Creek]

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 19th and early 20th 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.

Congratulations!

[Brief acceptance remarks by_____]

Georgetown previously received its certificate of designation, but here representing Georgetown are: _____

[Slowly go through 5 views of Georgetown on Power Point slides as narration commences]

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.

Congratulations!

[Brief acceptance remarks by _____]

Next we have Glenwood Springs. Representing The Springs are:

[Show five slides of Glenwood Springs while narration unfolds]

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.

Congratulations!

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Thank you for your efforts in historic preservation.

Next, we have Lake City. Present are:

[Show four views of Lake City while narration unfolds]

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 19th century Colorado silver camps and was named for nearby Lake San Cristobal. Prospecting began around 1871. The arrival of the Denver & Rio Grande railroad 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.

[_____ comments]

Thank you for your fine work.

And finally, here is Park County, home to our very own “South Park.” Accepting their certificate are:

[Show four slides of Park County images as narration unfolds]

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 19th 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 19th and early 20th 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.

Thank you, and congratulations, Park County.

On behalf of the President and Mrs. Bush, as well as ACHP Chairman John Nau and our *Preserve America* Federal partners like the Department of Agriculture, congratulations to all of the Colorado *Preserve America* communities. We encourage more communities to seek *Preserve America* designation.

I remind everyone of the *Preserve America* Community affinity session that begins at 2:30, where we'll have the opportunity to hear from some of the *Preserve America* communities about their strategies and accomplishments.

Thank you.