



The *Preserve America* Initiative

Preserve America is a White House initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our 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 our communities. Detailed information on the initiative can be found at www.PreserveAmerica.gov.

Major components of the *Preserve America* initiative include:

***Preserve America* Presidential Awards**

Four awards are given annually to organizations, businesses, government entities, or individuals for exemplary accomplishments in the sustainable use and preservation of cultural or natural heritage assets, demonstrated commitment to protecting and interpreting heritage assets and integrating them into community life, and taking innovative, creative, and responsible approaches to showcasing historic resources in their communities.

The winners of the 2004 *Preserve America* Presidential Awards were announced in May 2004 during National Preservation Week. The awardees were the Lackawanna Heritage Valley in Pennsylvania; the Blue Ridge Heritage Initiative in North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia; the Beaumont Hotel in Colorado; and the Historic Raven Natural Resources Learning Center in Montana. The deadline for 2005 nominations was November 1, 2004, and award winners will be announced in the spring of 2005.



President and Mrs. Bush present a Preserve America Presidential Award to Executive Director Mary Regan and Folklife Director Wayne Martin of the North Carolina Arts Council. The award honored the Blue Ridge Heritage Initiative (photo by Paul Morse, White House)

***Preserve America* Communities**

This program recognizes and designates communities that protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization, and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs. Since the program began, Mrs. Bush has designated 247 communities as *Preserve America* Communities.

Benefits of designation include White House recognition; a certificate of recognition; a *Preserve America* Community road sign; authorization to use the *Preserve America* logo on signs, flags, banners, and promotional materials; listing in a Web-based *Preserve America* Community directory; inclusion in national and regional press releases; official notification of designation to State tourism offices and visitor bureaus; and enhanced community visibility and pride. Four application and designation cycles occur each year. The next deadline is June 1, 2005.

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***Preserve America* History Teacher of the Year Award**

On October 19, 2004, Mrs. Laura Bush presented Kathleen Cochrane Kean of Glendale, Wisconsin, the first national “*Preserve America* History Teacher of the Year” award during a ceremony held at the New York Historical Society in New York City. Ms. Kean was selected from a group of finalists from each State, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, who each received \$1,000 and a core archive of history materials for his or her school library.

This new award is a project of the *Preserve America* White House initiative to honor an outstanding teacher of American history. The award, which Mrs. Bush introduced January 15, 2004, is facilitated by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Deadlines vary by state, but state submissions for the next national award consideration are due in June 2005.

Educational Outreach

Preserve America has worked with the History Channel’s Save Our History initiative to create a teacher’s manual with lesson plans and volunteer ideas to involve students in preserving historic sites in their communities. In addition, First Lady Laura Bush has prepared three public service announcements on the importance of preserving America’s heritage that aired through 2004, and are continuing in 2005.

Executive Order 13287: “Preserve America”

Signed by President Bush March 3, 2003, this Executive order complements the *Preserve America* initiative. The order establishes Federal policy to provide leadership in preserving America’s heritage by actively advancing the protection, enhancement, and contemporary use of the historic properties owned by the Federal Government. Under the order, the ACHP has issued recommendations to the President and Federal agencies on stimulating initiative, creativity, and efficiency in the Federal stewardship of historic properties.

The order also encourages agencies to seek partnerships with State, tribal, and local governments and the private sector to make more efficient and informed use of these resources for economic development and other recognized public benefits. In addition, it directs the Secretary of Commerce, working with other agencies, to use existing authorities and resources to assist in the development of local and regional heritage tourism programs that are a significant feature of many State and local economies.

Grants Budget

President Bush’s FY 2006 budget proposes \$12.5 million in grants to assist communities in preserving their cultural and natural resources. These grants would support community efforts to demonstrate sustainable uses of their historic and cultural sites and the economic and educational opportunities related to heritage tourism.

The program would not fund bricks-and-mortar projects, but rather would complement the Save America’s Treasures grant program by helping local communities develop sustainable resource management strategies and sound business practices for the continued preservation of heritage assets. Eligibility would be extended to State Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, designated *Preserve America* Communities, or Certified Local Governments that have applied for *Preserve America* Community designation.

The White House is working with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Defense, and Transportation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities to implement *Preserve America*. For more information about the *Preserve America* initiative and its programs, visit **www.PreserveAmerica.gov**.