

Oxford Convention and Visitors Bureau

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oxford Among Mississippi Preserve America Communities honored by Gov. Barbour

Oxford was among the Preserve American Communities honored by Gov. Barbour at a ceremony in Vicksburg, Mississippi last week. Representatives and officials from the 14 designated Preserve America Communities and first four Preserve America Grants in Mississippi met at the Southern Cultural Heritage Center to celebrate their heritage tourism and historic preservation accomplishments.

The event featured special guest, Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour, and John L. Nau, III, chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). Also addressing the gathering were Mitch Butler, the Department of the Interior's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and Vicksburg Mayor Laurence Leyens.

Oxford was designated a Preserve America Community in April of 2007, for the restoration on the Depot. Representing Oxford at the celebration was Hugh Stump, Executive Director of the Oxford Convention and Visitors Bureau.

““Being recognized as a Preserve America community will assist us in our efforts in protecting Oxford's cultural, heritage, and historic assets, as well as helping motivate to our community to support historic preservation,” Stump said.

Oxford joins the 13 other Preserve American Communities in the state, including, Baldwin, Biloxi, Canton, Cleveland, Columbus, Corinth, Greenwood, Hattiesburg, Leland, Pascagoula, Port Gibson, Raymond, and Vicksburg. The four Preserve America Grant recipients in Mississippi are the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Office, “Rebuilding Mississippi's Heritage Tourism Industry Post Hurricane Katrina;” Biloxi, “Heritage Tourism Marketing Program;” Corinth, “Corinth Civil War Preservation Project;” and Vicksburg, “Regional Tribute to the 150th Anniversary of the Vicksburg Campaign.”

“It is more important than at any time in Mississippi's history to work to bring the economic and cultural benefits of historic preservation to the state and its communities, and Preserve America is helping to meet those needs,” Nau said. “Heritage tourism and other preservation development strategies are absolutely key to the economic strength and future of Mississippi.”

The celebration began with presentation of the certificate of designation, signed by Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States and Honorary Chair of Preserve America, to Mayor Danny R. Horton of Baldwin. This makes Baldwin Mississippi's newest Preserve America Community.

Preserve America is an Administration 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. For more information, including a list of communities, neighborhoods, and grants, please see www.preserveamerica.gov.

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