



Office of Will County Executive Lawrence M. Walsh

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Will County celebrates National Preservation Month with sign ceremony

JOLIET – There were smiles and congratulations all around as Will County celebrated the placement of the final sign denoting it as a Preserve America community.

May is National Preservation Month, an appropriate time for the celebration. “*This Place Matters!*” is the theme of the celebration sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Will County Executive Larry Walsh said before Thursday morning’s ceremony, “It’s obvious that we believe this year’s national theme. From my office, to the Land Use Department headed by Curt Paddock, the Historic Preservation Commission chaired by Virginia Ferry, the County Board which has supported these efforts, not only do we know that this place matters, but we’re willing to put in the work needed to support the words.”

The County received the designation from then-first lady Laura Bush in 2008. It is the only county in Illinois to have earned the designation. It joins seven communities in the state, including Lockport, to be so honored. Will County obtained signs like the one posted at the County Office Building that the Highway Department has posted at 17 entrances to the county.

The Preserve America distinction provides numerous benefits for the County. Benefits include: White House recognition; eligibility to apply for Preserve America grants; inclusion in the Preserve America website directory; inclusion in national and regional press releases; and official notification of designation to state tourism offices and visitor’s bureau.

Will County’s Preserve America status opened up new funding opportunities and in 2008, it received a \$25,000 Preserve America grant to continue its rural structures survey project. This month, the County utilized the funding to launch its rural structures survey project in Wilmington and Jackson Townships.

Since the National Trust for Historic Preservation created Preservation Week in 1971 to spotlight grassroots preservation efforts in America, it has grown into an annual celebration observed by small towns and big cities with events ranging from architectural and historic tours and award ceremonies, to fundraising events, educational programs and heritage travel opportunities.

Due to its popularity, in 2005, the National Trust for Historic Preservation extended the celebration to the entire month to provide an even longer opportunity to celebrate the diverse and unique heritage of our country’s cities and states, and enable more Americans to become involved in the growing preservation movement.

Although Will County’s 2008 Preserve America community designation is recent, the County has been engaged in efforts to incorporate the preservation of the County’s historic and cultural assets in its growth and development plans for 17 years.

Will County adopted its Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1992, which established the nine-member Will County Historic Preservation Commission as well as the County’s Register of Historic Places. Amy Munro, manager of the Will County Historic Preservation Commission, said, “The Commission, under the leadership of the County Executive, County Board and, most importantly, Will County residents, works together to protect, enhance, and enjoy the places that matter to them.”

Learn more about National Preservation Month at www.PreservationNation.org/PreservationMonth and Preserve America at www.preserveamerica.gov/. Learn more about Will County's historic preservation program at www.willcountylanduse.com/HPC/.

CUTLINE:

Will County Historic Preservation Commissioner Gretchen Sullivan (from left), Will County Board member Steve Wilhelmi, Historic Preservation Commission Chairwoman Virginia Ferry, Commissioner Catherine Boo and Will County Executive Larry Walsh pose with the Preserve America sign that will be fastened to the County Office Building, 302 N. Chicago St. Seventeen signs have been posted at entrances to the County designating Will County as a Preserve America community.