



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau**

**1101 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Abilene, TX 79601**

**Nanci Liles – 676-2556**

**Chamber President Mike McMahan- 677-7241**

**Cultural Affairs Council - Lynn Barnett - 676-1161**

Kelly Langford Thompson, 325-668-3176

Dr. Don Frazier, 325-668-6222

### **Abilene earns federal Preserve America grant**

Abilene's heritage tourism efforts earned a vote of confidence from the Bush Administration Thursday as the city was named a Preserve America grant recipient at an award ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Don Frazier, chairman of Abilene's Cultural & Heritage Steering Committee a sub-committee of the Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau's board of directors, accepted the \$111,832 check from First Lady Laura Bush at an early morning ceremony on Capital Hill. Abilene was among 37 organizations that were awarded funds at Thursday's event.

Abilene was awarded the funds to underwrite a proposed list of heritage tourism marketing projects, including advertising and public relations programs, as well as a matching fund program to encourage meeting and convention planners to book events at historical venues.

Abilene earned the federal Preserve America City designation in spring of 2005, making the city eligible to apply for grants to support economic development through preserving historic assets and leveraging them into economic development for the city. "We had the opportunity to apply for heritage tourism funding under a selection of categories and decided 'marketing' was the best fit for Abilene," said Kelly Langford Thompson, Cultural & Heritage Tourism Director. "Our city has done such a wonderful job restoring historic properties and nurturing its cultural venues. The city has a strong product for heritage tourists, especially with the regional appeal of Frontier Texas! These funds will help us step up our efforts to inform the state and country about those assets."

Laura Bush is the honorary chairman for the Preserve America initiative, which combines efforts from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; the U.S. Departments of Defense, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Education; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities; and the President's Council on

Environmental Quality. The initiative encourages communities to preserve historical assets and make them accessible to community members and visitors.

Abilene's Cultural & Heritage Tourism Initiative is a collaborative effort of the Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council, affiliates of the Abilene Chamber of Commerce.

Check out [www.preserveamerica.gov](http://www.preserveamerica.gov)

-30-

**Your Washington D.C. affiliates may have footage or photos of the ceremony.**

Other helpful information:

- The grant application was prepared by the Cultural & Heritage Tourism program and officially submitted through the Mayor's office in December.
- Grants were capped at \$150,000 per year and required matching funds.
- Funds will be used over a 2-year period.
- To earn funds, the grant application had to be approved by a federal grants administration committee, as well as by the offices of the Secretary of Interior and President Bush.

**END**