

Media Contacts:

National Trust for Historic Preservation Office of Communications, 202-588-6141 or
Stephanie Seacord, sseacord@lemd.com, 603-772-1835

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION SELECTS PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR ITS 2008 LIST OF AMERICA'S DOZEN DISTINCTIVE DESTINATIONS

Captivating Blend of Coastal Beauty, Historic Buildings and a Lively Downtown

Washington, D.C. (February 7, 2008) – Today, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** named **Portsmouth, New Hampshire** one of its **2008 Dozen Distinctive Destinations**. Since 2000, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has annually selected communities across the United States that offer cultural and recreational experiences different from the typical vacation destination. From dynamic downtowns and stunning architecture to cultural diversity and commitments to historic preservation, the selected destinations boast a richness of character and exude an authentic sense of place.

The elegant seaport of Portsmouth, the nation's third oldest city, is one of the most culturally rich destinations in the country with a stimulating mix of historic buildings, sidewalk cafes, great restaurants, art galleries, jazz clubs and distinctive artisans' boutiques. Radiating out from Portsmouth's iconic North Church, streets bustle with activity. The town brims with preserved historic sites including, seven National Historic Landmarks. From the striking selection of grand mansions, including the gabled former lodgings of renowned naval captain John Paul Jones to The Black Heritage Trail, a walking tour that traces the roots of African Americans in New Hampshire, Portsmouth is packed with history.

Among the town's finest historic destinations is Strawbery Banke Museum, named after the earliest Portsmouth settlement. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, Strawbery Banke captures 400 years of Portsmouth history through 35 original buildings and historic landscapes and gardens. Each building shows a slice of life from a bygone era, some permitting visitors to watch traditional craftsmen at work. Significantly, this site was rescued from poorly conceived urban renewal policies of the 1950s.

One of New England's most cherished historic hotels —Wentworth by the Sea—is in close proximity to Portsmouth. Named to the Trust's *11 Most Endangered Places List* in 1996, this historic structure, which served as a hub for social, business and political luminaries from around the world since 1874, fell on hard times in the 1980s. Due to the Herculean efforts of a coalition of preservationists, community supporters and the non-profit Friends of the Wentworth an extensive renovation was executed. Today, with its stunning ocean views, this Victorian gem is a member of the National Trust's Historic Hotels of America and remains an enduring blend of gracious hospitality and 21st century convenience.

“Thanks to a longstanding commitment to historic preservation, Portsmouth, New Hampshire has never forgotten its sense of place,” said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “With its captivating blend of coastal beauty, historic buildings and lively downtown, there is something for every age and interest to experience.”

“Portsmouth is a place that is not only defined as a ‘Distinctive Destination’ by history, it is a place that helps define many aspects of the history of our nation, thanks to the blend of preservation and interpretation championed by so many active community groups,” said Margeurite Mathews, president of the Portsmouth Historical Society. “Since our earliest days, the Portsmouth Historical Society has been

dedicated both to preserving our history and to telling Portsmouth's stories along with the city's other historic homes, museums and sites. As we move into 2008 with a new gateway that preserves two historic downtown buildings and provides an interpretive center for visitors, this wonderful recognition by the Trust helps us bring those stories to an ever-wider audience."

Settled in 1623 at the mouth of the Piscataqua River, Portsmouth grew largely on its strength as a major shipbuilding center and fishing community. Four fires in the first half of the 1800s led the residents to build with brick, creating an extraordinary legacy of 19th century architecture. In 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt chose Portsmouth to host America's first peace conference to end a war between two former powers and earned the Nobel Peace Prize for the resulting Treaty of Portsmouth.

The 2008 list of America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations includes:

Aiken, S.C.—Aiken seamlessly balances its varied 19th century heritage with cosmopolitan flair to offer all the necessary ingredients for a great vacation.

Apalachicola, Fla.—Apalachicola, an authentic coastal town renowned for its mouth-watering seafood and singular charm, features a waterfront dotted with fishing vessels, a downtown filled with eclectic shops and streets lined with historic buildings.

Columbus, Miss.—The birthplace of prize-winning playwright, Tennessee Williams, Columbus thrives on its extraordinary mix of Southern history, natural beauty and culture—with antebellum homes spared during the Civil War and historic tours showcasing the remarkable impact of the African American community to a revitalized Main Street that possesses great curb appeal.

Crested Butte, Colo.—One of the most charming vacation destinations in the Rockies, this former coal mining village is a recreational paradise that offers a rare mix of rugged beauty, history and adventure no matter the time of year.

Fort Davis, Texas—With no traffic lights or chain stores, Fort Davis is a gateway to an unspoiled terrain, offering an extraordinary blend of majestic scenery, abundant wildlife and cultural resources that bring to life the history of the 19th century western frontier.

Friday Harbor, Wash.—This small, well-preserved community in the San Juan Island chain is one square mile of perfection—an antidote to city life, ideal for outdoor adventurers, wildlife enthusiasts and history buffs alike.

Portland, Ore.— Boasting both the charm of a small town community and the urban vitality of a big city, Portland, Oregon is a dynamic destination that offers an alluring mix of natural beauty, lively downtown entertainment and landmark historic attractions.

Portsmouth, N.H.—This elegant seaport, the nation's third oldest city, is one of the most culturally rich destinations in the country with its captivating blend of coastal beauty, historic buildings and lively downtown.

Red Wing, Minn.—Conveniently located one hour south of the Twin Cities, this handsome historic town features a treasure trove of architectural gems dating back to its beginnings as a riverfront trade point as well as an enviable natural environment.

Ste. Genevieve, Mo.—One hour south of St. Louis, Ste. Genevieve is the only French colonial village remaining in the United States, providing an unparalleled glimpse into the pioneer spirit of the early settlers.

San Juan Bautista, Calif.—Known as the “City of History” because of its exceptional collection of Spanish colonial architecture, San Juan Bautista showcases Old California like no other.

Wilmington, N.C.—From riverboats to battleships, grand old mansions to historic museums, splendid gardens to Civil War sites—Wilmington, North Carolina has a charm and style all its own that dates back nearly three centuries.

This is the ninth time the National Trust for Historic Preservation has announced a list of *Dozen Distinctive Destinations*. To date, there are 108 *Distinctive Destinations* located in 42 states throughout the country. To see a complete list, visit www.nationaltrust.org. In each community, residents have taken forceful action to protect their town’s character and sense of place. Whether by enacting a local preservation law to protect historic buildings against demolition, rewriting zoning codes to prevent commercial sprawl, removing regulatory barriers to downtown housing, making downtown areas more walkable, enacting design standards, or taking some other major step that demonstrates a strong commitment to their town, residents have worked hard to preserve the historic and scenic assets of their communities, with rewards that transcend town limits.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history – and the important moments of everyday life – took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, nine regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America’s stories. For more information visit www.nationaltrust.org

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1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
www.nationaltrust.org