

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Waynesboro Historic District is Georgia's 2,000th Listing in the National Register of Historic Places

ATLANTA (April 9, 2009) –The Waynesboro Historic District, located in Burke County, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on March 25, 2009, marking a milestone for Georgia as the state's 2,000th listing. The state's 1,000th listing, Lavonia's Carnegie Library in Franklin County, occurred more than 25 years ago. A celebration, sponsored by the City of Waynesboro and the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, will be held on May 13, 2009, on the steps of the Burke County courthouse in Waynesboro. The public is invited.

The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. The law that created the National Register, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, specifically calls for the nomination of places of **state** and **local**, as well as, national significance. As a result, Georgia has thousands of National Register properties that are important for their association with local history. Listing in the National Register is a preservation tool used by individuals and communities to increase awareness of historic resources, recognize the significance of a place, and document Georgia's built environment. In addition, owners of National Register properties may be eligible for rehabilitation tax incentives, which encourages downtown and neighborhood revitalization. Heritage tourism and education is often based on documentation provided in National Register documentation. National Register listing also ensures that historic resources will be taken into account in the planning of federally funded or licensed projects.

In Georgia, the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources serves as the state historic preservation office and administers state and federal historic preservation programs, including the National Register. In 2008, Georgia ranked 13th in the nation for the number of listings in the National Register of Historic Places. "Georgia has a very active National Register program," according to Gretchen Brock, National Register Coordinator. "Each listing in the National Register may represent from one to over 2,000 historic resources, as in the case of large historic

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districts. In Georgia, we have over 69,000 historic resources listed in the National Register.”

Waynesboro’s National Register listing adds over 400 more historic resources to that number. This large district encompasses the concentration of historic commercial, industrial, and residential areas within the incorporated limits of the city of Waynesboro, including four previous National Register listings.

Waynesboro (originally spelled Waynesborough) was a crossroads community formed where the Quaker Road (6th Street) and the road from Savannah to Augusta (Liberty Street) met. It was founded by state legislation in 1783 as the county seat of Burke County. After railroads reached the area by the mid-1800s, the town grew to become the regional hub for processing and shipping of farm products, which spurred the growth of commercial and residential areas. The town has adopted the moniker “Bird Dog Capital of the World,” because the Georgia Field Trials, which began there in 1901, continue to the present day.

The district is significant in several areas including architecture, community planning and development, politics/government, commerce, industry and African American heritage. Its architectural significance derives from its representative collection of commercial buildings that reflect design and construction traditions commonly found in Georgia towns, along with its many excellent examples of houses from the 1830s through the 1950s that showcase the types and styles identified in the statewide context, *Georgia’s Living Places: Historic Houses in their Landscaped Settings*. Houses range from large high-style homes on the major streets, such as Liberty and Jones, to more modest dwellings on the smaller streets and the outskirts.

In community planning and development, its significance lies in its intact historic county-seat plan. Waynesboro’s town plan was established in 1783, and is a variation of the “Augusta”-type plan with wide main streets and lots that were set aside for public buildings. The historic layout with mostly uniform rectangular lots is still intact.

As the county seat, Waynesboro is also significant in politics/government for the presence of buildings directly related to activities and events associated with local county government, such as the courthouse, jail, public utility buildings and administrative offices. The 1857 courthouse and its 1939 Works Progress Administration (WPA) annex are located on one of the original public squares.

The other three designated public lots were developed for commercial use. In the area of commerce, Waynesboro’s significance derives from its role as the historic commercial center of Burke County and the region. Typically the county seat filled this role, and provided for the day-to-day commercial needs of its residents. One- and two-story, attached, brick storefront buildings characterize the central commercial core.

With the coming of the Savannah and Augusta Railroad circa 1856, an industrial area for the processing and storage of agricultural products was established roughly three blocks east of Liberty Street. The district is significant in industry because of the predominance of several agricultural processing businesses located along the railroad, and the intact resources associated with those industries, such as warehouses, gins, silos, and grain elevators.

In the area of African American heritage, the district is significant because of the presence of an intact African American community with several key landmark buildings. The northwest portion of the district has the highest concentration of African American resources, including significant churches and schools.

The district has a large number of community landmarks, including the Anthony Wayne Hotel (1925), the Melrose Hotel (circa 1870), Waynesboro Grocery Company (circa 1898), the Confederate Memorial Cemetery, the former U. S. Post Office (circa 1931), the “Calaboose” jail (circa 1900), St. Michael’s Episcopal Church (1894), Thomas Grove Baptist Church (1908), Thankful Baptist Church (circa 1923), First United Methodist Church (1938), First Presbyterian Church (1884), First (Waynesboro) Baptist Church (1935), Haven Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church (1888), Waynesboro High and Industrial School (circa 1920), and the Waynesboro Grammar School and High School complex (circa 1926, 1936).

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources serves as Georgia’s state historic preservation office. Their mission is to promote the preservation and use of historic places for a better Georgia. HPD’s programs include archaeology protection and education, environmental review, grants, historic resource surveys, tax incentives, the National Register of Historic Places, community planning and technical assistance. For more information, call 404-656-2840 or visit their Web site at www.gashpo.org.

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