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CITY OF TYBEE ISLAND

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Tybee Receives *Excellence in Restoration* Award

Tybee Island, Ga. – (April 15, 2008) The City of Tybee Island is proud to announce receipt of a Georgia Trust Historic Rehabilitation Award for the restoration of the Fort Screven Guard House. This effort was a joint project requiring support from City staff and Council, the Tybee Historical Society, Savannah Restoration, and preservation consultant Sarah Pierson-Jones. The Guard House, listed in the National Register as a contributing building of the Fort Screven National Historic District, has acted as a Community Center for the Island since the 1940s and is even more popular today, generating additional use fees for the City. Located on Van Horne Street at the end of North Campbell Street, it sees heavy traffic as visitors pass by this building on their way to Fort Screven buildings, the Tybee Lighthouse and Historical Museum, and the North Beach. It stands as an example of how preserving historic buildings and artifacts can contribute to community pride and economic development.

Once the City Council had made a commitment to this preservation project, the City used the Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds to finance the project. Councilman Eddie Crone championed the project from the City Council, making sure the funds were made available as needed. Ralph Anderson, owner of the general contractor, Savannah Restoration, took a personal interest in overseeing the project, and Sarah Pierson-Jones' expertise was directed at making sure existing materials were preserved when possible and that accurate details were provided when restoration or repair was required. The involvement of Cullen Chambers, executive director of the Tybee Historical Society, ensured the planning was executed in keeping with the Island's other commitments to historic preservation.

This unique version of a design widely used for the US Army was initially created as a military jail. However, the use of local building materials, pressed tin walls and ceilings and wrap-around porch added to a pleasing aesthetic for such a functional building. Also unique for a barrier island building, the Guard House was outfitted with a basement. Having survived two major fires and decades of public use after decommissioning, the beautiful wood floors, tin ceilings, and original colors have been restored at a cost of \$440,000. This investment represents Tybee's on-going commitment and dedication to our history in a way that promotes continued utility while preserving its beauty and elegance.

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Incorporated in 1887 and currently home to about 3,400 permanent residents, Tybee Island is steeped in history, having been a strategic defensive location for the Savannah River from colonial times through the Civil War to the World Wars. For more information about the City of Tybee Island, visit us online at <http://www.cityoftybee.org>.

The Tybee Historical Society is housed on the grounds of the historic Tybee Island Lighthouse, which is also its best known restoration. THS has been involved in other restoration projects within the lighthouse grounds, as well as on a variety of buildings that were part of the facilities of Ft. Screven. In addition, Tybee's unique, raised-cottage architectures and older public buildings receive the attention of THS. Learn about their activities at <http://www.tybeelighthouse.org>.

The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation is the country's largest statewide, nonprofit preservation organization with more than 8,000 members. Committed to preserving and enhancing Georgia's communities and their diverse historic resources for the education and enjoyment of all, The Georgia Trust generates community revitalization by finding buyers for endangered properties acquired by its Revolving Fund; provides design assistance to 105 Georgia Main Street cities and encourages neighborhood revitalization; trains Georgia's teachers to engage students in 61 Georgia school systems to discover state and national history through their local historic resources; and advocates for funding, tax incentives and other laws aiding preservation efforts. The Georgia Trust is a recipient of the Trustees Award for Organizational Excellence from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. More at <http://www.georgiatrust.org>.

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