

Tybee Island is Georgia's 88th Certified Local Government

ATLANTA (May 20, 2014) – The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is pleased to announce that the City of Tybee Island (Chatham County) is Georgia's 88th Certified Local Government (CLG). The National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior confirmed the designation on May 5, 2014.

The City of Tybee Island passed a local historic preservation ordinance in 1999 and has a seven-person citizen board serving as its historic preservation commission (HPC). The Tybee Island HPC has participated in statewide trainings and continues to encourage the preservation education of its members, as well as the larger coastal community. Tybee Island Mayor Jason Buelterman spoke about the CLG designation, stating, "The City of Tybee Island is proud to achieve this important designation. Our community has long recognized the value of preserving our rich history, as evidenced by our commitment to being a Main Street Community, the restoration of the lighthouse and its auxiliary structures, the restoration of the Ft. Screven guardhouse, and the ongoing efforts to reopen the Tybee Post Theatre. This designation will allow us to further commit ourselves to historic preservation by adding to our toolbox of resources."

One of Georgia's barrier islands, Tybee Island has an intriguing and extensive history. The island is believed to have been initially settled and named by the Euchee Indian tribe, occupied by Spanish forces in the sixteenth century, and used as a safe haven for pirates in the decades prior to its colonization under General James Oglethorpe. In 1736, Oglethorpe ordered the construction of the Tybee Lighthouse, a community landmark that is one of the few remaining eighteenth century lighthouses in North America. The island became a popular resort destination after the Civil War and served as an integral part of America's Coastal Defense System with the construction of Fort Screven in 1897. The Fort Screven Historic District was designated in 1982 and was later joined by the Back River Historic District and the Strand Cottages Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. The designation of these historic districts and other preservation efforts demonstrate the City of Tybee Island's commitment to protecting their community's heritage.

The CLG program extends federal and state preservation programs to the local level, expanding the scope of local responsibilities and opportunities for preservation. Georgia has the second-highest number of CLG-designated communities in the United States. Participation requires the community to create a preservation ordinance that establishes a design review commission as well as other state and federal requirements. Tybee Island is now eligible for federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grants that are administered by HPD. These HPF grants may be used for a variety of preservation activities including historic resource surveys, National Register of Historic Places nominations, educational activities, marketing purposes, publications, heritage tourism studies, and predevelopment plans. To learn more about the CLG program, visit HPD's website at www.georgiashpo.org/community/clg.

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.

The mission of the Department of Natural Resources is to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic and cultural resources for present and future generations, while recognizing the importance of promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilize sound environmental practices.

#

For press inquiries contact Historic Preservation Division Director David Crass - 404-656-9344 and david.crass@dnr.state.ga.us