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Governor Kaine Highlights Virginia's #1 Ranking for Historic Districts Listed on National Register of Historic Places**– State added 29 districts and 61 individual properties in 2008 –**

RICHMOND – Governor Timothy M. Kaine today highlighted Virginia's ranking as first among the 50 states and U.S. territories for the number of historic districts added to the National Register of Historic Places during federal fiscal year 2008. It is the fourth consecutive year in which Virginia has achieved top ranking for districts listed.

"These historic districts bring economic development opportunities to communities all over Virginia," Governor Kaine said. "This recognition once again reminds us that the Commonwealth's history is central to the history of our country."

Virginia ranked second in the nation overall in 2008 for the combined number of historic districts and individual properties listed on the National Register, according to the National Park Service. The National Register program is managed in Virginia by the Department of Historic Resources, in partnership with property owners and local communities.

In 2008, Virginia added 29 historic districts and 61 individual properties to its thousands of previously listed places on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register. These additions cover districts in Arlington, Clarke, Fauquier, Henry, Loudoun, and Northampton counties, and the cities of Alexandria, Charlottesville, Emporia, Hampton, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, Petersburg, Richmond and Suffolk. The districts listed represent the broad range of Virginia's rich and diverse historic legacy, and include places that recall the Commonwealth's colonial, agricultural, and manufacturing past, its Native American and African American history, and its commercial, urban, and suburban growth from the late 19th through the mid-20th century.

"These rankings reflect the keen interest of Virginia's citizens in historic preservation. Virginia property owners and communities continue to lead the nation in seeking formal recognition of our historic neighborhoods, and putting Virginia's history to work," said Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Kilpatrick noted that Virginia has consistently ranked among the top states in listing historic properties for many consecutive years. "We were number one nationally in 2005 with 28 historic districts, in 2006 with 29, in 2007 with 30, and for 2008, we placed first again with 29. These numbers are a testament to the power of preservation to foster prosperity through historic rehabilitations."

An economic study by Virginia Commonwealth University's Center for Public Policy, released last year by the Department of Historic Resources, found that Virginia's state rehabilitation tax credit program generated nearly \$1.6 billion in economic impact in the Commonwealth and supported just under 11,000 jobs during the program's first 10 years.

A National Register listing allows property owners to pursue federal rehabilitation tax credits to restore older buildings for income-producing uses. When paired with state rehabilitation tax credits, which can be more broadly applied to non-income producing properties, property owners may be eligible to receive a 45 percent return on eligible expenses for the one-time cost of rehabilitating a historic property. Many of the recent properties listed individually or as contributing to a historic district are making use of tax credit incentives to create residences, assisted living facilities, and commercial and retail spaces.

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