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For Immediate Release

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**The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation
Announces its 2011 List of State's 10 'Places in Peril'**

ATLANTA, Oct. 13, 2010 — The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation released today its 2011 list of 10 *Places in Peril* in the state.

Sites on the list include: Zion Church in Talbotton; Rex Village in Clayton County; Craigie House (DAR Building) in Atlanta; John Ross House in Rossville; Harrington School in St. Simons Island; Medical Arts Building in Atlanta; Fairview Colored School in Cave Spring; Martin House in Columbus; historic buildings of Sparta in Hancock County; and, Berrien County Courthouse in Nashville.

“This is the Trust’s sixth annual *Places in Peril* list,” said Mark C. McDonald, president and CEO of the Trust. “We hope the list will continue to bring preservation action to Georgia’s imperiled historic resources by highlighting ten representative sites,” McDonald said.

Places in Peril is designed to raise awareness about Georgia’s significant historic, archaeological and cultural resources, including buildings, structures, districts, archaeological sites and cultural landscapes that are threatened by demolition, neglect, lack of maintenance, inappropriate development or insensitive public policy.

Through *Places in Peril*, the Trust will encourage owners and individuals, organizations and communities to employ proven preservation tools, financial resources and partnerships in order to reclaim, restore and revitalize historic properties that are in peril.

The Trust will provide on-site preservation assistance to each of the 2011 *Places in Peril* through its *Partners in the Field* program, funded by grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a number of charitable organizations in Georgia.

Sites that have been placed on previous years' lists have included: the Wren's Nest, home of folklore writer Joel Chandler House in Atlanta, which has undergone extensive restoration since its 2007 listing; Paradise Gardens, an internationally acclaimed folk art site in Chattooga County; Gilmer County Courthouse, a historic hotel building demolished in 2008; and the Crum and Forster Building in Atlanta. Updates on these sites and others can be found at www.georgiitrust.org.

The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation is one of the country's largest statewide, nonprofit preservation organizations. 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 102 Georgia Main Street cities and encourages neighborhood revitalization; trains teachers in 63 Georgia school systems to engage students to discover state and national history through their local historic resources; and, advocates for funding, tax incentives and other laws aiding preservation efforts.

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Editor's Note: Summary information on each 2011 *Places in Peril* follows. For additional background material and more information on each site including downloadable high-resolution images, please go to www.georgiitrust.org/news/2011pip.php.

President and CEO Mark C. McDonald is available for in-person and telephone interviews. Call 404-885-7802 to arrange a time.

The Trust will premier its 2011 list of the 10 *Places in Peril* in Georgia at a reception tonight (Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2010) at Rhodes Hall at 1516 Peachtree St. NW, Atlanta. The evening's activities, which begin at 7:00 p.m., will include remarks by Mark C. McDonald, president and CEO of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation.

Summary Information on each *Places in Peril* Site

Zion Church, Talbotton, Talbot County

Built in 1848 by Talbotton master carpenter James D. Cottingham and master brick mason Miranda Fort, Zion Episcopal Church features many fine details from the crenellated parapets on the roof to the triple-arched entrance. The church's gallery was used regularly for

religious instruction of slaves, which was encouraged by the bishop of the diocese and Zion parishioners. Family box pews are as originally installed.

Major threats to the site are neglect, lack of maintenance and lack of funding for maintenance. The structure has significant wood rot on the exterior along with the need for typical weathering repairs. Additionally there is a diseased mature oak tree directly adjacent to the church, which would crush the building if it fell.

Rex Village, Clayton County

Historic Rex Village has recently experienced national attention because of its ancestral lineage to First Lady Michelle Obama. Rex Village is a 90-acre community featuring unique 19th century structures such as Rex Mill, Rex Bridge, and several period homes and mercantile buildings.

The new bypass has caused virtually all pedestrian and vehicular traffic to be diverted from the main storefronts. The resulting lowered property values have created the potential for Rex Village to be purchased by developers who may seek to inappropriately redevelop or even demolish the site. Rex is unincorporated, has no design codes for new construction and uses septic tank water systems.

Craigie House (DAR Building), Atlanta, Fulton County

Also known as the DAR Building, the 1911 Craigie House was the first chapter house of the Daughters of the American Revolution established in Georgia, which was only the second chapter of the DAR established in the country. Reportedly parts of the original Craigie House were moved to this site from the 1895 Cotton States Exposition in Piedmont Park, where it was the Massachusetts Commonwealth Building.

The building was used by the DAR until 1985 when it was damaged by a fallen tree. Inman Park Properties purchased the property in 2001, but as a result of the downturn in the real estate market, the building was foreclosed upon. Neglect and apparent squatters, compounded by a price tag of approximately \$500,000 make the parcel more appealing as a buildable lot to many potential buyers.

John Ross House, Rossville, Walker County

The John Ross House is the oldest surviving structure in northwest Georgia and the metropolitan Chattanooga area. Built in 1797 by trader John McDonald, the building was a major stop for traders and settlers. McDonald's grandson, Chief John Ross, grew up in the house and later became the leader of the Cherokee Nation until his death in 1866.

Settling of the building has been compromising the construction of the late 18th century building. The Chief John Ross House Association maintains the structure and recently re-roofed the building with historically appropriate wood shingles. The association has an aging membership, and due to its location, has no local preservation support.

Harrington School, St. Simons Island, Glynn County

The last African American school on St. Simons Island, the Harrington School represents the most viable and valuable venue to interpret the Gullah-Geechee heritage of St. Simons Island. The building formerly served as the Harrington Grade School from the 1920s until its desegregation in the 1960s, when it was converted to a daycare facility and served as such until the 1970s.

The school building has incurred significant deterioration through the years despite being purchased by Glynn County and the St. Simons Land Trust as part of a 12-acre park. Last fall, after a grant request was denied, Glynn County declared the building beyond repair and placed its demolition on their 2010 agenda. Supporters of the school rallied. Plans for demolition were tabled, and supporters obtained a second opinion by preservationists that the building's foundations were solid and restoration was possible.

Medical Arts Building, Atlanta, Fulton County

Designated as a local landmark in 2005, the 1927 Medical Arts Building is closely associated with the growth and development of Atlanta as a major medical center for Georgia and the Southeast. Designed by G. Lloyd Preacher, the Medical Arts Building was Atlanta's first high-rise office building constructed specifically for medical professionals.

The building was affected severely by GDOT's "Freeing the Freeways" program in the mid-1980s that widened Atlanta's Downtown Connector. With the Peachtree Street bridge closed for a year and the permanent loss of the Alexander Street bridge, many medical practices in the building had difficulty remaining open.

Numerous real estate deals have fallen through. Although there are multiple liens against the building, the current owners have it listed for \$11 million.

Fairview Colored School, Cave Spring, Floyd County

The circa 1924 Fairview Colored School is one of the few remaining educational structures which provided education to African American children in Georgia. It provides a glimpse of segregated education and the impact it had on the children of the period.

After the school closed in the 1950s, it was used as rental property and a storage unit. Since that time, upkeep and repairs have not been maintained. Immediate steps are needed to address structural issues. Access to the building is hampered by deep brush and kudzu. The floors and roof are unstable and the building is uninsured.

Martin House, Columbus, Muscogee County

Designed in 1954 by the architectural firm of Finch, Barnes and Paschal, the International style Martin House anchors the northeast corner of Midtown Columbus' Peacock Woods-Dimon Circle National Register Historic District. Its gardens were designed by noted and prolific landscape architect Thomas D. Church.

The structure is currently vacant and owned by a property management company that is cited by preservation groups in Columbus as not performing adequate maintenance, consequently resulting in rapid deterioration.

Historic Buildings of Sparta, Hancock County

The town of Sparta contains a large number of architecturally significant buildings. Before the Civil War, Hancock County was a leading cotton producer, and the wealth created by the plantation system is evident in Sparta, its county seat. By 1803 Sparta was one of only five towns in the state to have a newspaper, and the town had begun a substantial library.

Today, vacancy and neglect of many historic resources are hindering the economic revitalization of the small town. The historic Baker House was lost to demolition; many others are threatened by a new demolition ordinance. The Georgia Trust has been involved in Sparta for many years; most notably, its Revolving Fund program helped to save the Terrell-Stone and the Rossiter-Little Houses. The Sparta-Hancock Historical Society is also active, and the City of

Sparta has created a historic district commission. However the City has not yet designated a historic district for the commission to administer.

Berrien County Courthouse, Nashville

A local landmark protected by a local preservation ordinance, the Berrien County Courthouse was built in 1898 and designed by W. Chamberlin and Company of Knoxville, Tennessee. The building incorporates steel and reinforced concrete; its fireproof structure has survived several fires with no significant damage. Marked by a prominent bell tower still ringing on the hour, the courthouse currently serves as office space for the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority/Better Hometown Office, and Berrien County Historical Foundation.

The Berrien County Courthouse receives inadequate funding for needed maintenance and suffers from a leaking roof, termite damage and failing plaster. The accrual of this neglect is causing significant damages to the structure.

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