

◆ **MEDIA ALERT** ◆

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DATE: March 17, 2008

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HERITAGE AREA MEETING TO FOCUS ON TOURISM TRENDS

Kansas City, Missouri – As part of the discovery phase of the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) management planning process, the organization's monthly meeting will focus on Tourism Trends. National expert and planning team consultant, Cheryl Hargrove, will lead the meeting about global, national and regional trends impacting the potential growth and sustainability of tourism in the 41-county region covering Eastern Kansas and Western Missouri. A travel industry veteran with more than 25 years experience, Hargrove is best known as the National Trust for Historic Preservation's first heritage tourism director and recently served as the Associate Director for National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations. The meeting is scheduled:

Date: **Thursday, April 10, 2008**
Time: 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Location: Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) Offices
600 Broadway, Suite 300, Kansas City, MO
Reservations: Debbie White, 785/856-5301 (required by 4/7/08)

This monthly meeting is open to any person interested in helping set and implement a regional agenda for FFNHA. Reservations are required. The meeting will also include presentations by representatives from the Kansas Travel & Tourism Division, Department of Commerce and the Missouri Division of Tourism. Tourism is recognized as one of the primary strategies for the region's sustainable growth.

"The future of Eastern Kansas and Western Missouri depends on local citizens championing the values and celebrating the assets of our region," Billings said. "We must share all the significant stories that have helped shape our country and communities, foster understanding and insight among current and future generations, and build collaborations that will strengthen the economic vitality of the region."

The President signed the enabling legislation designating FFNHA on October 12, 2006 as one of 10 new National Heritage Areas; there are currently 37 designated regions across the nation. FFNHA – comprising the 41-county region of Eastern Kansas and Western Missouri – is recognized for its distinctive history, culture, and landscape that tell the stories about the quest for national and individual freedoms. Enacted by a bill signed by the President, National Heritage Areas are living landscapes recognized through a partnership with the National Park Service. FFNHA is currently engaged in its management planning process, led by a consulting team comprised of national and local experts. The final plan is scheduled for submission to the National Park Service in February 2009.

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