



## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

**Sue M. Cobb**  
Secretary of State

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Contact: Lauren Van Lierop  
850.413.9702  
[ljvanlierop@dos.state.fl.us](mailto:ljvanlierop@dos.state.fl.us)

### **MISSION SAN LUIS RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS “PRESERVE AMERICA” PRESIDENTIAL AWARD**

*~Florida’s First Lady and Mission San Luis Executive Director accept  
2006 “Preserve America” Presidential Award at the White House~*

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** — Florida’s First Lady Columba Bush and Mission San Luis Executive Director Bonnie McEwan accepted a 2006 “Preserve America” Presidential Award on behalf of Mission San Luis at the White House this morning. Mission San Luis, located in Tallahassee, was one of only four projects in the nation selected for this prestigious recognition.

“I’m truly honored this recognition has been bestowed upon Mission San Luis,” said First Lady Columba Bush. “It has given me great pleasure to be involved with the important work being done there. The educational components and extraordinary research are a blessing to those of us seeking to expand our knowledge of our state’s diverse heritage.”

Mission San Luis was the western capital of Spanish Florida from 1656 to 1704. In addition to more than 1400 Apalachee residents, San Luis was home to several hundred Spaniards, including friars, soldiers, and civilians. The 17<sup>th</sup> century settlement was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 and purchased by the State of Florida in 1983. Since that time, the site has been managed by the Florida Department of State’s Division of Historical Resources.

“We are honored to receive this coveted award for Mission San Luis, one of our country’s true cultural treasures,” said Florida Department of State Secretary Sue Cobb, who joined First Lady Bush and Director McEwan at the awards ceremony. “The wide variety of educational programs offered at the Mission illuminate important and under-represented aspects of Florida’s early history. The Hispanic and Native American interactions researched and analyzed at San Luis continue to increase our understanding and appreciation of our diverse national heritage.”

Office of the Secretary

R. A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250  
Telephone: 850.245.6500 • Facsimile: 850.245.6125 • WWW: <http://www.dos.state.fl.us>

**“PRESERVE AMERICA” PRESIDENTIAL AWARD—Page Two**

Over the past twenty years, Mission San Luis has become the most thoroughly investigated mission in the Southeast. The Mission has become a model program for investigating Hispanic-American cultural development in our country, and is the premier source of education on the Florida missions for our state’s schools, visitors and residents.

The results of the site’s archaeological and historical research programs have been distributed to broad professional audiences through numerous publications and presentations. It has also shaped the Mission’s public programming which includes living history interpretation, hands-on exhibits, and ongoing archaeological demonstrations. San Luis also offers education programs and special events throughout the year. Today, the town center of Mission San Luis is reconstructed to provide visitors of all ages and from all walks of life with a powerful experience reflecting cultural change in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is the only reconstructed mission of the more than 100 such settlements established in Spanish Florida during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

“Preserve America” is a White House initiative that was announced by First Lady Laura Bush on March 3, 2003. It was developed in cooperation with a number of Federal agency partners to encourage and support community efforts for the preservation and enjoyment of our priceless cultural and natural heritage. The “Preserve America” Presidential Award honors organizations, businesses, government entities, and individuals for sustaining and preserving cultural and natural heritage assets while integrating them into contemporary community life.

For more information on Mission San Luis, please visit <http://www.missionsanluis.org/>.

For more information on “Preserve America” please visit [www.preserveamerica.gov](http://www.preserveamerica.gov).

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