



NEWS RELEASE

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**NATIONAL TRUST NAMES OBERLIN, OH., ONE OF AMERICA'S
DOZEN DISTINCTIVE DESTINATIONS**
Annual List Promotes Heritage Tourism

Washington, D.C. (March 3, 2004) – Oberlin (pop. 8,200) has it all – the quiet air of a small town combined with the art, music and culture of a big city. Often called “the most cosmopolitan small town in America,” the community was founded in 1833 – at the same time as Oberlin College, one of the nation’s leading liberal arts colleges and the first institution of higher education to open its doors to all students regardless of color. Not far from the shore of Lake Erie and a half-hour from Cleveland, Oberlin boasts a vibrant downtown shopping district, tree-lined streets, world-class restaurants and beautiful parks. The community has a rich and diverse history and has played a key role in many of the major reform movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries – from the Underground Railroad through more recent campaigns for temperance, female suffrage and civil rights. Built in 1842, First Church served as the meeting place for the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society, and nearby Westwood Cemetery is the final resting place of former slaves and famous abolitionists. Other sites of interest include the Oberlin Heritage Center, a complex of three historic buildings, including a one-room school; the Allen Memorial Art Museum, one of the country’s most prestigious college art museums; Frank Lloyd Wright’s Weltzheimer-Johnson House; and the famed Oberlin Conservatory of Music, which offers scores of free concerts each year.

For these reasons, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the country’s largest private, nonprofit preservation organization, today named Oberlin to its 2004 list of America’s *Dozen Distinctive Destinations*, an annual list of unique and lovingly preserved communities in the United States.

“Oberlin may be a small town, but it played a large role in the history of 19th- and 20th-century America,” said National Trust President Richard Moe. “Its strong sense of place, its history and its commitment to preservation make it an appealing vacation destination for anyone who wants a better understanding of our nation’s past.”

The cities and towns on the 2004 list of America’s Dozen Distinctive Destinations are:

Astoria, Ore. (pop. 9,800): The oldest U.S. settlement west of the Rockies, Astoria has long been revered by residents and visitors alike for its picture-perfect setting on the Columbia River. This port city provides a bounty of historic sites, natural beauty and great seafood.

Galena, Ill. (pop. 3,600): Rich deposits of lead ore near Galena were the source of many fortunes in the 19th century. Today, spectacular architecture and reminders of eras past are the real treasures in this hilly riverside town that touts down-home charm and plenty to keep visitors busy.

Glenwood Springs, Colo. (pop. 7,700): Snugly nestled in a beautiful valley, this historic resort community serves up a restorative dose of natural hot springs, exciting outdoor activities, eclectic dining and shopping, and evocative links with the Rocky Mountain frontier past.

Guthrie, Okla. (pop. 10,000): Literally born overnight in the epic Oklahoma Land Rush of 1889, Guthrie was Oklahoma’s first territorial capitol. Today, this unique and thriving community offers many opportunities for visitors to experience the rough-and-ready spirit of the Wild West.

Lewisburg, W.Va. (pop. 3,600): Civil War history, arts, folklore and natural splendor are plentiful in historic Lewisburg, where visitors can soak up small-town charm while enjoying interesting architecture, sophisticated shops and galleries and a wide range of outdoor adventures.

Macon, Ga. (pop. 97,000): Shaped by diverse cultures spanning 12,000 years of history, this friendly city boasts thousands of historic buildings and charming neighborhoods, plus museums that celebrate everything from ancient civilizations to sports and rock-and-roll.

Marshall, Mich. (pop. 7,460): Famed as an open-air textbook of 19th-century American architecture, Marshall's expansive historic district boasts tree-lined streets, interesting shops and restaurants, and an inviting atmosphere that entices visitors to linger and enjoy themselves.

Napa, Calif. (pop. 70,000): The hub of the famed Napa Valley wine region, this charming city was a staging site for the Gold Rush of the late 1850's. Today its historic neighborhoods showcase great architecture and enjoyable attractions – plus an inviting year-round climate.

New Paltz, N.Y. (pop. 6,000): A hip college town with a proud history, New Paltz combines the vibrancy of a campus environment with the traditions of its French Huguenot past – all displayed in a setting that offers great natural beauty and glimpses of centuries gone by.

Newport, R.I. (pop. 25,000): Calling itself “America’s First Resort,” this compact, walkable community is a treasure-trove of museums, historic buildings and rocky shoreline – all reminders of the city’s past as a bustling colonial port and a 19th-century millionaires’ playground.

Oberlin, Ohio (pop. 8,200): Often called “the most cosmopolitan small town in America,” Oberlin nurtured many of the major reform movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Today it nurtures visitors with interesting historic sites, varied cultural offerings and easy-going charm.

Old San Juan, Puerto Rico (pop. 443,000): Founded in 1521 as a military stronghold and base for Spanish explorers, this picturesque urban center offers something for everyone: colorful colonial architecture, lush patios and plazas, historic sites, shops and restaurants for every taste, hopping nightlife, and great nearby beaches.

This is the fifth time the National Trust for Historic Preservation has compiled a list of *A Dozen Distinctive Destinations*. Seventy-five destinations in 31 states were nominated by individuals, preservation organizations and local communities.

The 12 winning communities met the following criteria: well-managed growth, a commitment to historic preservation with a protected historic core and meaningful context, interesting and attractive architecture, cultural diversity, activities for families with children, an economic base of locally-owned small businesses, and walkability for residents and visitors.

In each community, residents have taken forceful action to protect their town’s character and sense of place. Whether by enacting a local preservation law to protect historic buildings against demolition, rewriting zoning codes to prevent commercial sprawl, removing regulatory barriers to downtown housing, making downtown areas more walkable, enacting design standards, or taking some other major step that demonstrates a strong commitment to their town, residents have worked hard to preserve the historic and scenic assets of their communities, with rewards that transcend town limits.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Trust provides leadership, education and advocacy to save America’s diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Its Washington, DC headquarters staff, six regional offices and 25 historic sites work with the Trust’s members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states. For more information, visit the National Trust’s web site at www.nationaltrust.org.

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