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**PRESERVATION TEXAS CHAMPIONS PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED RURAL
AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES STATEWIDE**

SAN MARCOS, TX – Preservation Texas, the only statewide nonprofit historic preservation advocacy, education, and stewardship organization in Texas, is actively working to protect endangered rural African-American historic buildings and cultural landscapes statewide. The organization is providing support for rehabilitation projects through their *Texas Rural African-American Heritage Grants Program*, undertaking hands-on preservation work at the *Hopewell Freedom Colony* in Falls County, and serving as the fiscal sponsor for the *Dr. Dickey House reconstruction project* in Taylor.

“Rural historic resources are threatened statewide, and rural buildings associated with Black Texans are in particular need of attention”, said Evan Thompson, Executive Director of Preservation Texas. “This critically needed program can only address a handful of sites, but so many more are also in need of assistance.”

Preservation Texas is providing financial support and technical assistance for the rehabilitation of ten historic Black churches, schools, and lodge halls through their *Texas Rural African-American Heritage Grants Program*, made possible by a \$750,000 Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service. Each of these sites will soon be added to the National Register of Historic Places and will benefit from important investments in the coming years to ensure that they survive. Visit preservationtexas.org/traah to learn more about this program.

“These sites are of national importance because they are evidence of the accomplishments of Black Texans who struggled to build communities during the Reconstruction period,” said Thompson.

Preservation Texas also owns a historic 2,400-acre farm and ranch located near Kosse (about 45 minutes southeast of Waco). This vast cultural landscape contains a range of historic, natural, and archaeological resources, including the *Hopewell Freedom Colony*. Hopewell was settled before 1875 by five formerly enslaved farmers from Alabama and Mississippi who had been brought to Texas during the Civil War. At its height, the community included a Baptist church, a cemetery, a school, a masonic meeting hall, and a store. After nearly 100 years, the historic Hopewell Cemetery remains, and the former farmstead sites are now valuable repositories of

archeological information about Reconstruction-era Black settlements. Now owned by Preservation Texas, the documentation, preservation, and interpretation of the Hopewell Freedom Colony as part of their future Center for Rural Heritage is a critically important project. Visit preservationtexas.org/crh to learn more.

Additionally, Preservation Texas is serving as the fiscal sponsor for the reconstruction of the *Dickey House Museum and Multipurpose Center* in Taylor. The house, which was built by nationally-recognized Black doctor and civil rights leader Dr. James Lee Dickey (1893-1959), was burned to the ground by an arsonist in 2022 after many years of restoration work. The St. David's Foundation has awarded a grant of \$500,000 toward the project. The reconstructed house will serve as a community wellness center, providing Taylor residents with equitable access to medical care and social services. Visit preservationtexas.org/dickeyhouse to learn more.

Preservation Texas invites individuals, organizations, and communities to join them in their mission to protect endangered rural African-American heritage and help expand their statewide programs. You can support this work by becoming a member of Preservation Texas at preservationtexas.org/membership.

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About Preservation Texas:

Founded in 1985, Preservation Texas empowers Texans to preserve their cultural heritage, and stewards significant buildings, collections, and cultural landscapes to ensure their permanent protection. Visit preservationtexas.org for more information.