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MEDIA ADVISORY

MAJOR OPENING ON PHILADELPHIA'S INDEPENDENCE MALL, WED., DEC. 15

WHAT: Press briefing and ribbon cutting for the opening of **The President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation** in Philadelphia's Independence National Historical Park

This nationally significant site tells the story of the inhabitants of the first executive mansion: Presidents George Washington and John Adams and nine enslaved Africans held by President Washington. The nearly \$12 million site focuses most clearly on the lives of the enslaved and the free black population to which they aspired. Creation of the President's House stirred deep emotions about the paradox of American slavery and fueled a community activism effort that shaped its design. A decade in planning and implementation, the resulting space gives voice to once-unheard individuals and is made even more powerful by its proximity to the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, iconic symbols of freedom and democracy.

The City of Philadelphia has managed the design and construction of the site. Independence National Historical Park will assume management of it on opening day. Funding for the project came from public and private sources.

WHO: Press Briefing (indoors):

- Michael A. Nutter, mayor, City of Philadelphia
- Cynthia MacLeod, superintendent, Independence National Historical Park
- Rosalyn J. McPherson, project director, President's House
- Video with comments by the project's leaders, activists, designers, builders and historians, including Dr. Gary Nash (UCLA) and Dr. Spencer Crew (George Mason University). Most of the interviewees will be available for comment following the briefing.

Ribbon-cutting Ceremony (outdoors):

- The Honorable Robert A. Brady, U.S. House of Representatives
- The Honorable Chaka Fattah, U.S. House of Representatives
- The Honorable Michael A. Nutter, mayor, City of Philadelphia
- The Honorable John F. Street, former mayor, City of Philadelphia
- Cynthia MacLeod, superintendent, Independence National Historical Park
- Rosalyn J. McPherson, project director, President's House
- Emanuel Kelly, FAIA, principal, Kelly/Maiello Architects & Planners
- Michael Coard, Esq., founding member, Avenging the Ancestors Coalition
- Public audience of approximately 300 people

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Organizers:

The City of Philadelphia, Independence National Historical Park, the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation and the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau's Multicultural Affairs Congress collaborated to make today's events possible.

Press is encouraged to attend both events. The indoor event will give a brief background on the project and an opportunity to interview key players. Refreshments will be served. The second event, taking place outdoors, is ceremonial and will introduce the project's lead advocates.

WHEN: Wednesday, December, 15, 2010

Press Briefing: 11:00-11:45 a.m. (indoors)

Ribbon-cutting Ceremony: 12:00 noon-1:00 p.m. (outdoors)

WHERE: Press Briefing: Independence Visitor Center, 2nd floor ballroom, Northeast corner of 6th & Market Streets

Ribbon-cutting Ceremony: President's House
Southeast corner of 6th & Market Streets

These two locations are directly across the street from one another. Market Street between 5th & 6th Streets will be closed throughout the event.

**KEY POINTS/
PHOTO OPS:**

Press Briefing: (indoors)

- Project history, timeline, video and photos, press releases
- One-on-one interview opportunities with key spokespersons, including designers, historians and advocates of the project
- Aerial view of site available from Visitor Center's terrace

Ribbon-cutting Ceremony: (outdoors)

- Musical rendition of the preamble of the *U.S. Constitution*
- Mayor Nutter, Superintendent MacLeod and others cut ribbon
- The President's House site itself, which is an open-air site on the footprint of the original structure. Interpretive elements include:
 - Video screens
 - Illustrated and text panels
 - A glass vitrine overlooking exposed archaeology
 - Bronze footprints symbolizing the road to freedom
 - An area for reflection
 - Stone etching of the names of the nine documented enslaved individuals: Austin, Christopher, Giles, Hercules, Joe, Moll, Oney, Paris and Richmond

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