



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Hal Smith

May 10, 2008

217-553-4443

**The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Legislation is Signed by President Bush**

The Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition has learned from the White House that legislation to create the National Heritage Area, named for President Lincoln, has been signed into law. The legislation, originally authored by Senator Dick Durbin and Congressman Ray LaHood from Illinois, designates the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition as the management entity for the new National Heritage Area. The President signed the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 that included the authorization.

“We are honored to be named the management entity for the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. It is especially appropriate to pay tribute to President Lincoln this way, as we approach the celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of the most revered President in American history,” stated Hal Smith, Director of the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition.

“The Heritage Area designation will help us more fully develop and interpret a rich and vivid visitor experience that reflects the impact Lincoln had on our history and culture. Our mission will be to create and market a visitor experience that is interesting, historic and fun for travelers from across America and around the world,” Smith said.

“The LFL Heritage Coalition is grateful for the support of elected officials and leaders across Illinois, and their confidence in us to manage this Heritage Area that will represent such a significant piece of American history,” Smith added.

The law authorizes Congress to appropriate up to \$1 million a year for 15 years to support the preservation and interpretation of the historic and cultural heritage of the time. The Heritage Area will explore and develop these in the context of Lincoln’s life and its impact on the

American cultural landscape. Projects using federal funding in the Heritage Area, must be matched by local, state, private, in-kind or foundation funding.

The Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition will first tackle the development of a management plan, with significant input from communities and sites across the 42 counties. The plan will develop criteria for evaluating future projects that the National Heritage Area will consider for participation and possible funding in future years. That plan must be approved by the National Park Service who provides technical assistance and funding for Heritage Areas.

For more information on the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition and Lincoln Legacy sites to visit in Illinois, go to: [www.lookingforlincoln.com](http://www.lookingforlincoln.com).

###