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**Tourism Cares Announces Six Worldwide Grant Recipients**  
*Cultural and Heritage, and Natural Sites to be Preserved and Conserved*

Canton, MA – August 8, 2011 – Tourism Cares, the non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the travel experience for future generations, gave out the first group of grants in 2011 totaling \$60,000, to six non-profit organizations as part of its Worldwide Grant Program. Most recipients will receive full or partial matching funds from other organizations. Therefore a total of \$90,000 will be presented to the organizations for projects in the areas of historic preservation and educational programs for responsible and sustainable tourism at natural, cultural and historic sites.

Tourism Cares is pleased to announce the following first group of 2011 Worldwide Grant recipients:

- Association for Rebuilding/Restoration and Revitalization of Stojan Jankovic Castle – Bridges, Croatia
- Endangered Species International, CA for the Philippines
- Friends of L&N Depot, Inc., Bowling Green, KY
- Library of Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt
- Pragma, India
- Spirit of Cleveland, Inc., Cleveland, OH

Tourism Cares is proud to expand the worldwide reach of its grants, with four of the six grantees representing overseas projects.

“Tourism Cares has long been an advocate of conservation and preservation as a means to engage in responsible tourism,” said Bruce Beckham, Executive Director of Tourism Cares. “The worthy recipients of the Tourism Cares Worldwide Grants have demonstrated goals that are in line with Tourism Cares. We’re excited that our mission continues to have an impact overseas as well as here in North America.”

Supporting non-profits around the world with grant funding is vital to the mission of Tourism Cares. To date, Tourism Cares has awarded funding to 172 organizations in 32 countries and 40 states (including a dozen U.S. national parks). These grants, when combined with matching funds, total more than \$2 million.

Following are brief descriptions of the projects:

The mission of the **Association for Rebuilding/Restoration and Revitalization of Stojan Jankovic Castle – Bridges**, based in Croatia, is to rebuild the rare medieval Jankovic Castle. Situated near the town of Zadar, it is a top national cultural heritage site damaged during the Croatian War of Independence. The Tourism Cares Worldwide Grant will help preserve its historic ethnographic

collection and re-establish the exhibition gallery, housed in the castle's museum. Its preservation will enable the site to re-open thus helping support tourism. Visitation to the site is expected to increase exponentially. The project has the support of the local community, due to the site's potential to serve as a vehicle for regional economic development. The project also has the support of the Ministry of Tourism and Croatia Institute of Tourism.

**Endangered Species International** is a small organization in California with strong volunteer support and local community involvement. Its mission is to undo the negative impact of humans on the survival of endangered wild species, to save them and preserve their habitats. The site, the Mt. Matutum protected landscape in the Philippines, is home of the vanishing Bl'aan indigenous tribe, which makes it culturally unique. This natural site is a national biodiversity hotspot with 110 different plant species and 57 animal species. The Tourism Cares Worldwide Grant will support the organization's responsible educational program to train locals as eco-guards and tourist guides. It will also aid in the creation of interpretive signs at the site. The project has the support of municipal and state tourism offices. Annual visitation to this site is 100,000, and is expected to increase substantially due to improved access and enhanced visitor experience.

The mission of the **Friends of L&N Depot, Inc.**, d/b/a the Historic RailPark & Train Museum, is to preserve the history of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. Located in Bowling Green, KY, this heritage site is of national importance to rail enthusiasts, tourists, and students of American transportation and black history. Listed on the National Historic Register, it contains a 1910 wooden #109 three-way (white, baggage, and colored) railroad car. It is one of only five such remaining cars from the era of Jim Crow legislation- a time of segregation that is of social and cultural importance to African-American heritage. The Tourism Cares Worldwide Grant will support a historic preservation project to rebuild and replace rail windows in this vintage car. The project has the support of the Bowling Green Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Kentucky Travel Industry Association, and Kentucky Secretary of Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet.

The **Library of Alexandrina** and its Antiquities Museum, situated in Alexandria, Egypt, is a cultural heritage site of global significance. Through its educational programs, it aims to give visitors a glimpse of the different eras of Egypt's rich multi-cultural history. This archaeological museum is very unusual, because it is located within the library and it displays artifacts discovered in the same location as the museum. The Tourism Cares Worldwide Grant will fund improvements to the museum that will help conserve and preserve the rare papyrus collection. Through adding exhibit showcases and security cameras, the collection will be protected while on display to the public. The site receives 63,000 visitors annually, nearly half of whom are international. The project not only has the support of the Alexandria Regional Authority for Tourism Promotion but also of the international community, through cooperative agreements with libraries around the world.

**Pragya** is an award-winning non-profit organization, based in India, whose mission is to support holistic, sustainable development for the poorest and most vulnerable communities of the remote, high-altitude Himalayas. Its community-based educational program seeks to conserve and protect a popular tourism route comprising five wetlands of immense natural and cultural significance. This natural heritage site attracts 27,000 visitors annually to view its rare birds, due to its biodiversity. Once this project is

completed, visitation is expected to increase 20 percent. The Tourism Cares Worldwide Grant will help train local inhabitants as guides in sustainable tourism and ecological restoration, prepare an interpretive visitors guide to the wetlands, and upgrade the existing Heritage Interpretation Center. The organization has been internationally recognized, having received awards for the innovativeness, quality, and impact of its conservation work.

The **Spirit of Cleveland, Inc.** is the non-profit subsidiary of Positively Cleveland, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, an award-winning Destination Marketing Organization in Cleveland, OH. Its mission is to stimulate economic development in Northeast Ohio, through educational programming and enhancing service standards for the travel and tourism industry. The program seeks to support the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Canalway, established as a National Heritage Area in 1996. It is an exceptional network of historic sites, cultural venues, parks, and recreation spaces. It is accessible year-round by car or train, or on foot, welcoming 5.2 million visitors annually. The proven program, the *Cleveland Plus Certified Tourism Ambassador Program*, aims to build regional tourism and could serve as a good model for other tourism bodies.

### **About Tourism Cares**

Tourism Cares is an innovative nonprofit organization formed in 2005 through a consolidation of the National Tourism Foundation and the Travelers Conservation Foundation. The organization works to preserve the travel experience for future generations through a three pronged approach. We award grants to natural, cultural and historic sites throughout the world. In addition, we host unique volunteer restoration projects designed specifically for travel professionals. Recognized as the most innovative “give-back” program in the tourism industry, Tourism Cares volunteer project and Volunteer Day draw thousands of corporate leaders and individuals together to share in the conservation and preservation of treasured cultural and historic sites. We also help assure a knowledgeable tourism workforce by granting academic and professional development scholarships to tourism and hospitality students and professions. For more information about Tourism Cares, please visit [www.TourismCares.org](http://www.TourismCares.org).

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