



JOHN GILMORE RILEY
CENTER/MUSEUM OF AFRICAN
AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 5, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Marion McGee

RILEY MUSEUM ADDRESS:

419 East Jefferson Street

P: (850) 681-7881

F: (850) 681-7000

E: info@rileymuseum.org

W: www.rileymuseum.org

John G. Riley Center/Museum is “*Casting the Net*” with an award-winning \$150,000 grant project from the Institute of Museum & Library Services

TALLAHASSEE – On Saturday, November 1, 2014, the John G. Riley Center/Museum officially launched its *Casting the Net* multi-state museum project benefiting African American museums and cultural organizations in four states, inclusive of: Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia. The two-year initiative focuses on statewide museum needs assessment, staff training, technology integration, and intergenerational exchange between museum founders and emerging leaders to aid in the development of sustainable statewide networks in three southeastern states.

The John Gilmore Riley Center/Museum for African American Culture (JGRCM), Inc., is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that has provided Tallahassee and the State of Florida with quality historical preservation and conservation programs since 1996. These programs help to foster appreciation of African American history through tours, exhibits, research, education, publications and subsequently led to the creation of the Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network (FAAHPN). Recognizing that African American museums were not “in the loop” of mainstream historic preservation initiatives, the JGRCM led the effort to organize a statewide network of museums. This Florida Network or FAAHPN now serves as an informational and technical assistance association that includes proprietary assets such as: A) The Museum Guide to Core Competencies, B) Annual Network Member Progress Report, and C) Administrative Procedures and Management Plans, all of which are valuable, capacity building resources that can and will be replicated within other states.

The Riley Museum in cooperation with the Florida Network is now charged with responding to growing interest in statewide collaboration among museums and culturally-specific organizations in other states. The *Casting the Net* project partners include the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN); the Center for the Study of African and African American Diaspora Museums & Communities (CFAADMC); the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission (NCAAHC) and Virginia Africana (a Network of Virginia-based Museum, History and Preservation Professionals). The intent of this project is to equip museums in four states to build alliances using a comprehensive approach to statewide network creation. Collaboration is vital to the long-term sustainability of the African American museum in particular and the proliferation of African American led cultural organizations nationwide. The initiative has been touted as a model project by the Executive Director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, Dr. Lonnie Bunch.

The *Casting the Net* project includes eight multi-state meetings in each of the four target states over a two-year period. Through on-site training and technical assistance, the four partner organizations will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to serve as community resource centers in their respective states. The project also seeks to increase understanding of the role of museums and cultural centers as places of empowerment, a topic that will be thoroughly explored during the Florida Network's upcoming Biennial Statewide Museums Conference, taking place in Tallahassee May 18-20, 2015.

This project was generously funded by the Institute of Museum & Library Services ("IMLS"), an independent, federal agency that is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The mission of the IMLS is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. The IMLS grantmaking, policy development and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.ims.gov or follow on Twitter @US_IMLS.

The John Gilmore Riley Center/Museum for African American Culture ("JGRCM") is dedicated to discovering and recovering the history of African Americans throughout the Big Bend Region and is open for tours from 10:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. Monday through Thursday; 10:00 A.M. until 2:00 P.M. on Friday and Saturday. (Museum Admission: \$2 for General Public | \$1 Seniors age 55 and over | \$1 Children age 12 and under). For more information please contact the John G. Riley Center/Museum at: (850) 681-7881 or log on to: www.rileymuseum.org.

###