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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

USI STUDENTS STAFF ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL IN NEW HARMONY Historic Sites “Go Green” with National Preservation Month Projects

NEW HARMONY, IN (May 13, 2010) National Historic Preservation month is observed in May. Historic New Harmony is celebrating Preservation Month, and strengthening its commitment to preservation and sustainability, May 17 to June 11 with a field school and educational programming. The 2010 Preservation Month theme “Old is the new Green!” reminds communities that restoring an object – or a historic site – is good for the environment.

The public can visit active archaeological sites in New Harmony as University of Southern Indiana students conduct excavations there through a joint effort of the University of Southern Indiana’s field school and the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites in New Harmony. Thirteen students will search key locations for signs of daily activity of the original Harmonist community founders, including the making and selling of red ware pottery and additional evidence of Harmonist dentistry.

The active sites are open to the public during the field school, and they will be added to the Historic New Harmony tours offered daily. The public also is encouraged to attend the Field School open house 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on June 5. This is a rare weekend opportunity to observe live excavation at the site, meet staff and participate in a question and answer session.

Dr. Michael Strezewski, assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Southern Indiana, will direct work at the historic Lenz House. Efforts at the property will be focused in the area of the former kiln, with the intention of gaining more insight into the production of

the Harmonist' famous red ware pottery. Christoph Weber, the potter who lived and worked at the spot from 1815 to 1824, made red ware pottery for the entire Harmonist community.

Bill Wepler, curator of Historical Archaeology for the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, will supervise work at Community House No. 2, focusing on documenting the day-to-day activities of the Harmonists. Excavations initiated in 2008 will continue at Community House No. 2 in order to document archaeological resources that might be disturbed by ongoing renovations to the building. Wepler said all such artifacts play a critical role in studying the Harmonists' lifestyle in Indiana, since there are so few physical remains of the community, aside from the buildings.

Artifacts unearthed during excavations are typically shared with the public after laboratory analysis and formal processing. This year, there's no waiting! In addition to the "dig" sites, a working laboratory will be set up at Beal House in New Harmony. It will serve as a designated processing location for field school artifacts and a place where visitors may get an inside perspective on the processes and products of excavation.

Midway through the field school, Wepler will discuss results of past excavations and goals for this year's work. His lecture, "Current Excavations at Community House No. 2," will be offered at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 20 at the Alexandrian Public Library in Mt. Vernon, and at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 26 in the Angel Mounds Interpretive Center. Archaeological investigations at the communal dormitory built by George Rapp's followers have yielded interesting insights and artifacts, including an unbroken Harmonist pot discovered there in 2008.

Historic New Harmony daily tours begin at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Atheneum/Visitors Center, located at 401 N. Arthur Street. For more information on Historic New Harmony, please visit www.newharmony.org. For more information about the archeological dig or to arrange an interview with either site director, please contact Dr. Michael Strezewski at mstrezewsk@usi.edu or 812.464.1931 or Bill Wepler at bwepler@dnr.in.gov or 317.232.8178.

A note from the National Trust for Historic Preservation:

"When you reinvest in older and historic buildings, live in a historic home, or even become a member of your local preservation organizations, you support a more sustainable world."

About Historic New Harmony:

Historic New Harmony's mission is to preserve New Harmony's utopian legacy by inspiring renewal and fellowship between people and communities through its programs and collections. Historic New Harmony is a unified program of the University of Southern Indiana and the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.

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Pictured is an unbroken Harmonist pot discovered during a 2008 archaeological dig at Community House No. 2, one of four communal dwellings built by George Rapp's followers between 1814 and 1824.