

Friday, June 15, 2007

Fayette County Record
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Trustees of the historic N.W. Faison Home, which was recently awarded a seed grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. From left are Johnelle Minzenmeyer-Miksch, Lorena Mueller, Mannie Fritsch-Schmid, Norman Hubbard, and Suzy Romberg.

Photo by Marie Watts

National Trust Gives Preservation Grant For Faison Home

To renew community interest in the historic N.W. Faison Home, the Faison Preservation Society, Inc., has been awarded a \$2,000 seed grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The grant, matched by La Grange philanthropist Sanford Schmid, will support efforts to raise funds urgently needed to make the home a star attraction for visitors.

"This grant will help us educate the public about the historic significance of the home and its value to the community," said Arnold Romberg, president of the Faison Preservation Society.

"The money will support the creation of a website, brochures, and other materials about the cultural and economic benefits of a restored Faison Home."

The society will seek private and additional foundation funding for repairs and restoration of the roof and exterior, for the installation of air conditioning and a new electrical system, and to refurbish furnishings and museum displays.

Built in 1854, with parts of the home dating from the 1840s, the structure was purchased and preserved in 1961 by the dedicated efforts of the La Grange Garden Club, which still owns the home. It contains rare original furnishings, artwork and personal and household items from the nineteenth century.

"The house has a unique story to tell about the people who settled this area," said Marie Watts, the historian of the Preservation Society. "We

can learn so much about who we are as Texans, what our values are, and how we related to each other in the past."

The Faison Preservation Society is an open membership organization, Romberg said. Anyone with an interest in historic preservation is invited to participate in the restoration effort and the fundraising campaign by contacting him at 979-968-9416.

The National Trust grant was funded by a gift from the Fondren Foundation in Houston, which established the Fondren Endowed Preservation Fund for Texas. Grants ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 are awarded to nonprofit groups and public agencies and must be matched dollar for dollar. The purpose of this Fund is to assist in the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of historic structures.

"With these start-up dollars, the Faison Preservation Society joins communities nationwide committed to preserving America's architectural and cultural heritage and, in so doing, creating more livable communities," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, chartered by Congress in 1949, is a nonprofit organization with more than 270,000 members. As the leader of the national preservation movement, it is committed to saving America's diverse historic environments and to preserving and revitalizing the livability of communities nationwide.