

For Immediate Release

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PRESS RELEASE:

***Beaufort County Leases Historic Federal Courthouse to
The Santa Elena Foundation***

BEAUFORT, S.C., March 9, 2015 – Beaufort County Council voted unanimously today to lease its historic Federal Courthouse to the Santa Elena Foundation, whose mission is the discovery, preservation, and promotion of the “lost 100 years of European colonization” through the international story of Santa Elena, the 16th Century settlement and colonial capital on present-day Parris Island in the United States.

The Federal Courthouse, located on 1501 Bay Street in downtown Beaufort, will serve as a unique cultural interpretive center that will become an important destination attracting local, national and international visitors. In addition, the building will include a planned archeological laboratory and Foundation offices.

“We are very pleased to lease the Federal Courthouse to Santa Elena Foundation,” said Beaufort County Council Chairman Paul Sommerville. “It will serve as a major attraction for Beaufort County and as an introduction to this very important, little known American story.”

According to Santa Elena Foundation Executive Director, Andy Beall, “We are most grateful to the Council for allowing us the use of this historical building. The strategic purpose of the Santa Elena Foundation is to accurately position Santa Elena in the historical record by promoting the role of the early Port Royal Sound colonial communities in the settling of America. The Santa Elena settlement was established 38 years before Jamestown. Without telling this part of our history, we literally lost the first century of our culture. The building made available by Beaufort County is an excellent location for the Foundation to share with the public this important story.”

Stuart Rodman, Beaufort County Council member and Santa Elena Foundation Board member added, “The nation’s top 16th Century Spanish Colonial historians agree on one significant fact: modern America started right here. These findings elevate our region to the importance it deserves in the history of our country. This is a huge watershed event for us. The interest, energy and capital enjoyed by Jamestown and St. Augustine will now be shared with Beaufort County.”

The Santa Elena Foundation is expected to move into the Federal Courthouse on July 1, 2015. An initial opening of the interpretive center will take place in the first quarter of 2016, followed by a grand opening in the fall of 2016, 450 years following the founding of Santa Elena.

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