

# Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Management Plan Executive Summary

Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition

Springfield, Illinois

August 2012



# Our Nationally Significant Story...

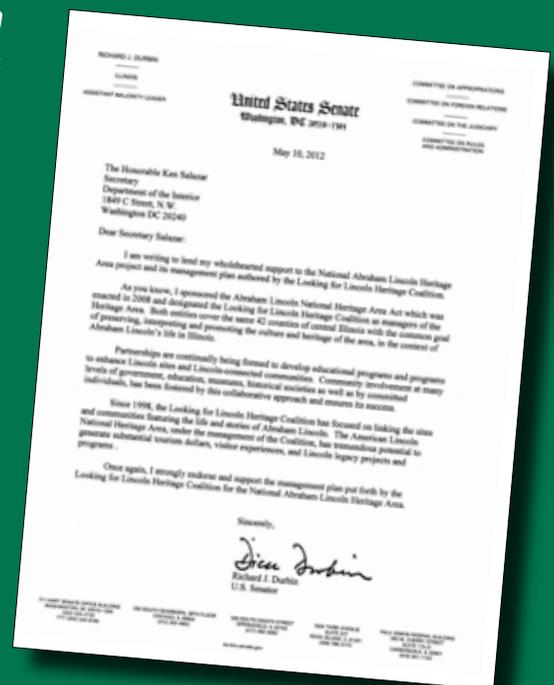
Few individuals have so profoundly influenced American history as did Abraham Lincoln. Millions around the world are inspired by the story of Lincoln's rise from humble beginnings to the presidency, his qualities of integrity and courage, and his decisive leadership which carried a fragile nation through one of its most trying periods.



Since 1998, the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition has focused on linking the sites and communities featuring the life and stories of Abraham Lincoln. The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area, under the management of the Coalition, has tremendous potential to generate substantial tourism dollars, visitor experiences, and Lincoln legacy projects and programs.

Once again, I strongly endorse and support the management plan put forth by the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition for the National Abraham Lincoln Heritage Area.

- U.S. Senator Richard J. Durbin



*“To this place, and the kindness of these people,  
I owe everything.”*

– Lincoln’s Farewell Address at the Great Western Depot in Springfield, February 11, 1861

## ... And Our Goals for Sharing It

- Maximize the heritage area’s effectiveness through strong **partnerships** that link communities, sites, organizations, ideas, and actions.
- Create **engaging experiences** that connect places and stories throughout the heritage area and promote public awareness of the region’s history, culture, and significance.
- Promote heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism and related heritage development that support increased **economic activity and investment** in heritage resources.
- Participate in a **national dialogue** on keeping America’s promise by examining national issues associated with the Antebellum period and in particular Abraham Lincoln’s life and evolving thought.
- Raise **public consciousness** about the needs and benefits of preserving the historic and cultural legacies of central Illinois.
- Facilitate initiatives for the **preservation and stewardship** of the region’s physical legacy of historic resources, communities, and landscapes.
- Strengthen the ability of sites and resources associated with Abraham Lincoln and his legacy to achieve long-term **sustainability**.
- Encourage and facilitate the enhancement of **community character and quality of life** related to the region’s heritage for the benefit of residents and to strengthen the visitor experience.



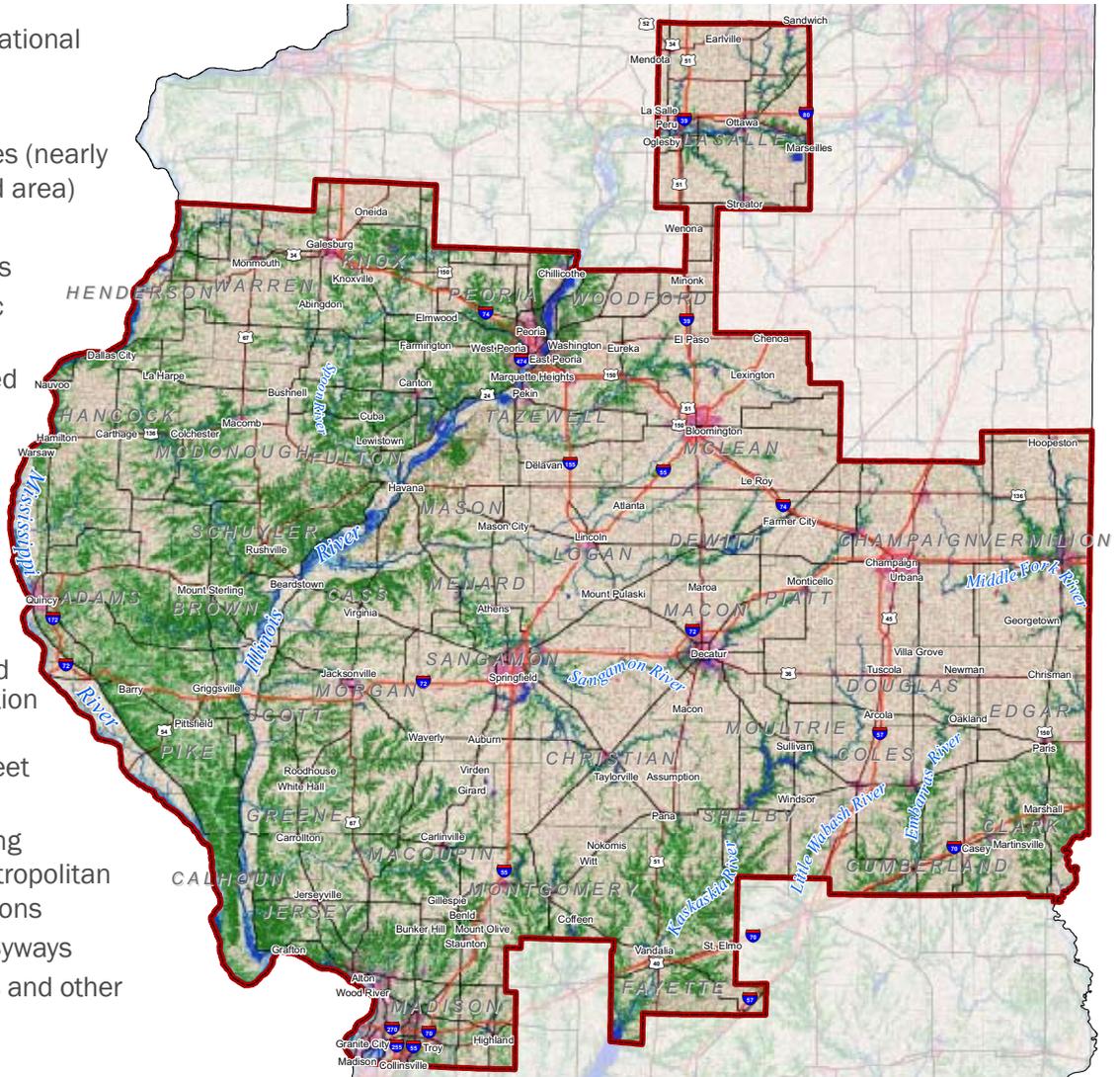
Above: The memory of Abraham Lincoln is ever-present in this National Heritage Area, as he is honored in the form of lifesize bronze statues on many a town square and other prominent locations (*Courtesy Heritage Strategies, LLC*) Previous: Interpretive plaza in front of the Old State Capitol, Springfield. (*Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition*)

# The Heritage Area Concept

Illinois is known as the “Land of Lincoln.” Central Illinois in particular possesses significant historic, cultural, natural, and scenic resources associated with Abraham Lincoln’s life and times. The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area is an authentic place where that history can be told and appreciated.

The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area contains:

- 42 counties
- 25,588 square miles (nearly half the state’s land area)
- 564 municipalities
- 2.2 million residents
- 10 National Historic Landmarks
- 432 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- 51 Historic Districts
- 214 protected natural areas encompassing 27,000 acres
- 140 state parks and other public recreation areas
- 16 Illinois Main Street communities
- 14 Regional Planning Agencies and 7 Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- 5 National Scenic Byways
- 70 interpretive sites and other cultural attractions



A handful of the resources associated with Abraham Lincoln and telling the stories of Lincoln’s times are well known and widely recognized, such as the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Lincoln’s New Salem State Historic Site, and the Old State Capitol. Many resources pertaining to the Lincoln story, however, are not well known, well preserved, or well supported. Others remain to be identified and preserved, including natural and agricultural landscapes.

In telling this story, we gain community and visitor interest in historic communities and resources. Creating a public presence across the heritage area builds community awareness and appreciation, engaging residents and encouraging participation in community action. We are establishing a powerful presence through:

- Identity and communications;
- Storytelling in many different places using many different means;
- Public art and other community enhancements;
- Programming and events; and
- Educational initiatives.

We are also focusing upon preserving the remaining sites and cultural landscapes of Lincoln’s times, revitalizing historic communities, and emphasizing the relevance of the region’s legacy to today’s culture and society.

The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area is a partnership of organizations and individuals dedicated to enhancing the communities and landscapes of central Illinois through recognition and support of their significant natural, cultural, and historical legacies.

## Our Mission



Above: Living history interpreters at New Salem State Historic Site have been engaging families and students in creative ways for decades. Their influence upon young people in particular has been inspiring. (Photo by Ben Kiningham)

## and The Importance of Partnerships



The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area's management plan is based on the concept of partnership. As the heritage area's coordinating entity, the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition (LFL) is responsible for guiding the heritage area. As a whole, however, the heritage area is a network of many different organizations and entities contributing toward a common vision by implementing programs described in the management plan.

During the management planning process, we structured committees, Community Working Groups, and an advisory steering group in order to enable collective decisions, set priorities, define responsibilities, and get to work. Each participant implements aspects of the plan according to its interests, goals, and capabilities, following heritage area criteria, guidelines, and processes, designed collaboratively.

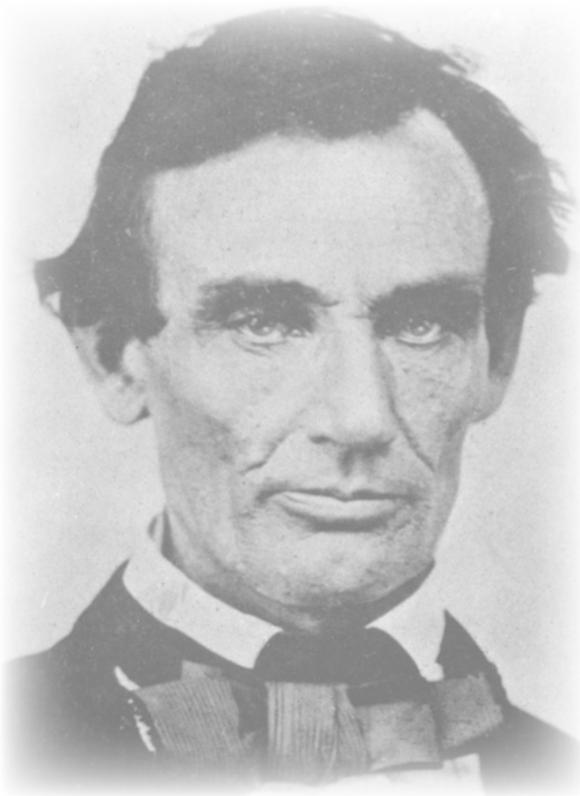
The "Community Working Group" is key to building the collaboration among local partners that is critical to our success. Partners can participate in programs individually or as part of a local Community Working Group, or both. These groups organize the contributions of local constituents and stakeholders, including government and business leaders, historic sites, educators, planners, and others.

# National Significance

of the

Abraham Lincoln

## National Heritage Area



Abraham Lincoln was the nation's sixteenth president and a **compelling American figure** who exemplified qualities of integrity, courage, and self-initiative. His principled leadership carried a fractured nation through the Civil War.

Lincoln matured into a leader capable of grappling with, on a national stage, the **issues of unity, equality and race relations, and democratic ideals** in a unique setting: the physical, social, economic, and political landscape of central Illinois. Ultimately the arc of Abraham Lincoln's life would lead to the presidency of the United States, a destination and office few have known first-hand. Yet, his life serves as a metaphor for the overall experience of his generation, allowing **exploration of the dynamics of mid-nineteenth-century America**.

Lincoln also shaped the people and places of Illinois. He left traces across Illinois in the form of stories, folklore, artifacts, buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes. Though scattered geographically and in varying states of development and interpretation, together **this "land of Lincoln" brings an immediacy and tangible quality to the powerful Lincoln legacy**.



Top: Photo of Lincoln taken in Pittsfield, Illinois, two weeks before the final Lincoln-Douglas debate in Lincoln's unsuccessful bid for the Senate, October 1, 1858. Source: Library of Congress. Above: The Lincoln Log Cabin Courthouse at the Macon County Historical Society Museum Complex in Decatur. (Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition) Next: The Lincoln Home National Historic Site. (Courtesy Heritage Strategies, LLC)

According to the federal law establishing the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area, its purposes include recognizing and interpreting “the distinctive role the region played in shaping the man who would become the 16th President of the United States, and how Abraham Lincoln’s life left its traces in the stories, folklore, buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes of the region.” (P.L. 110-229, Title IV C, Section 441(4))

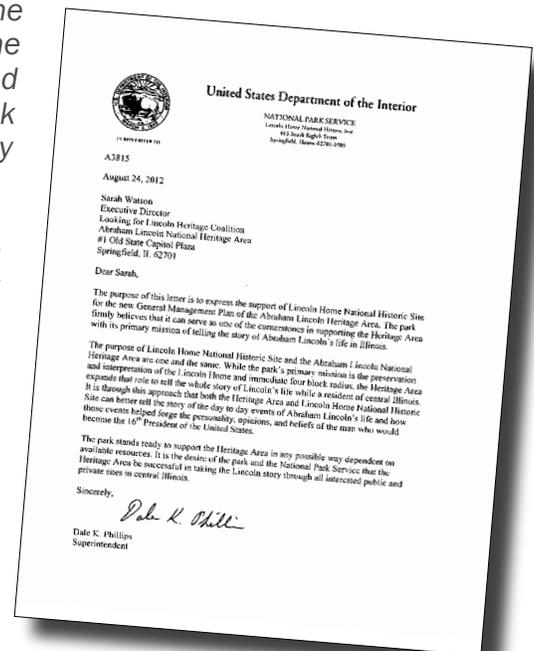


The purpose of Lincoln Home National Historic Site and the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area are one and the same. While the park’s primary mission is the preservation and interpretation of the Lincoln Home and immediate four block radius, the Heritage Area expands that role to tell the whole story of Lincoln’s life while a resident of central Illinois.

It is through this approach that both the Heritage Area and Lincoln Home National Historic Site can better tell the story of the day to day events of Abraham Lincoln’s life and how those events helped forge the personality, opinions, and beliefs of the man who would become the 16th President of the United States. The park stands ready to support the Heritage Area in any possible way dependent on available resources. It is the desire of the park and the National Park Service that the Heritage Area be successful in taking the Lincoln story through all interested public and private sites in central Illinois.

*- Dale K. Phillips*

Superintendent  
Lincoln Home National Historic Site



# Approach to the Heritage Area's Stories



Above: Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site, Lerna, Coles County (*Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition*) Below: One of “the Tea Ladies” of the David Davis Mansion State Historic Site, Nancy Perzo, pictured in 19th century garb. The Ladies present popular programs about life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries over tea in the McLean County landmark. It was built after the Civil War by the judge who traveled the 8th Judicial Circuit with Lincoln. (*Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition*)



This region's nationally significant stories are the reason the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area was created. Our approach to interpreting this rich array of local and regional stories is grounded in our appreciation of the historic character and significance of the heritage area's communities.

Our interpretive framework is designed to broaden and deepen the level of partner and community engagement that has already been demonstrated through the Looking for Lincoln program. It consists of six organizing elements:

- **Heritage Area Context and Presence:** Heritage area-wide initiatives, led by the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, set the context for local interpretive presentations. They include the introduction of interpretive themes through orientation exhibits, a website, and publications plus technical assistance for and coordination among partnering communities and sites.
- **Heritage Interpretive Sites** coordinate their storytelling through the heritage area's themes and a rich variety of local stories told in authentic places. Community, Regional, and Gateway Interpretive Sites each have a distinct role in accordance with their interests and capabilities.
- **Looking for Lincoln Communities** each tell their own Lincoln stories through outdoor exhibits and local interpretive sites portraying Lincoln's life and times through the people he knew and the places he visited.
- **Community Collaboration:** Communities collaborate through tour itineraries, themed presentations, and coordinated events. Tours based on the Lincoln-Douglas debates and the 8th Judicial Circuit where Lincoln practiced for many years are two primary collaborative endeavors.
- **The Landscape Lincoln Knew:** Remnants of the early landscape associated with Lincoln's times still remain and play a key role in our interpretive presentation, drawing connections between the heritage area's natural and cultural landscapes.
- **Partnering with Other Initiatives:** We partner with such initiatives as the scenic byways program, natural resource sites, Native American sites, and the region's non-Lincoln historic communities to relate our Lincoln-era stories to other stories and subjects significant to central Illinois.

# Approach *to* Heritage Tourism *and* Marketing



Heritage tourism is among the heritage area's federally legislated purposes and part of our economic revitalization strategy for historic communities, combining compelling interpretation with a great visitor experience. Wherever visitors start, we encourage them to discover interesting Lincoln stories elsewhere.

- Our primary product concept is **'Lincoln's America'** – marketing the historic character of the region and the stories and experiences to be discovered here. We will use heritage area branding within identified guidelines.
- Our initial marketing focuses upon (a) **visitors** in major population centers within driving distance of the heritage area and (b) **residents** visiting neighboring communities and sites.
- Statewide **tourism programs** reach out to national and international audiences. We rely on our local tourism and convention bureaus and the Illinois Office of Tourism in enhancing the visitor experience and marketing the heritage area.
- Our communications plan includes marketing initiatives under the guidance of our **Tourism Advisory Committee**. The management plan also addresses ways for partners to enhance their heritage offerings through the interpretive framework's guidance and performance measures to measure effectiveness in product development, marketing, and visitation.

# Approach *to* Education *and* Engagement

Educational programming is an important part of our heritage area mission. Partnering sites and organizations throughout the heritage area offer many successful educational programs. We provide support to strengthen and promote these existing programs. Our educational initiatives focus upon five areas of endeavor:

- K-12 educational programming;
- Teacher training;
- Student enrichment;
- Engaging youth organizations; and
- Programming for the general public.



Above: Actor Fritz Klein as Abraham Lincoln on the steps of the Old State Capitol, Springfield. (Photo by Donna Arnold Catlin)  
Previous: The Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor in LaSalle County is an experienced interpretive partner with stories that closely relate to heritage area themes. (Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition)

The heritage area encourages communities to rehabilitate historic buildings as a cornerstone of revitalization. A variety of local, state, and federal programs are available to support historic preservation.

We provide regional leadership by encouraging preservation activities and facilitating mutual support among our partners. We take a comprehensive approach to preservation and conservation in our communities and the surrounding landscape:

- **Community Preservation Programs:** We encourage and support community preservation programs, including the development of local resource surveys, preservation plans, historical commissions, historic districts, preservation ordinances, and other locally available preservation tools. Through our partners and Community Working Groups, we encourage a network of communities and preservation interests to work together to provide information, technical services, training programs, mentoring, financial support, and advocacy for mutual benefit.
- **State and National Collaboration:** We coordinate closely with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency's Preservation Services Division, promoting its preservation programs, facilitating program implementation, and collaborating in providing technical assistance. We also coordinate closely with state and national historic preservation nonprofit organizations and strengthen linkages between them and our local preservation organizations.
- **Heritage Area Landscapes and Natural Resources:** We support the inventory of remaining landscapes related to Lincoln's era and assess threats to their preservation. We work with our counties and land conservation organizations on landscape conservation, regional surveys, and educational programs aimed at private sector preservation and maintenance of historic farmsteads. We remain informed and involved in initiatives by organizations preserving natural landscapes, and our educational programming helps build public support for their initiatives.

# Approach *to* Preservation *and* Conservation



Above: Historic farm complex (Courtesy Heritage Strategies, LLC) Below: A rehabilitated historic commercial building on the square in Lincoln (Logan County) is an example of a rehabilitation project that strengthens downtown economic viability. (Courtesy Heritage Strategies, LLC)



Towns in the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area are vital to the quality of life for residents and the overall enjoyment of visitors. Collectively, small and large, they offer a nationally significant experience of nineteenth century townscapes. Their revitalization requires sustained local efforts in planning, preservation, enhancement, and business development. We seek to strengthen communities as centers of community, social, and economic life.



Jacksonville, Morgan County, an Illinois Main Street community, undertook a major streetscaping project. Even communities that are not currently recognized as Main Street communities are encouraged under the new Looking for Lincoln Communities designation program to make use of Main Street principles. *(Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition)*

We collaborate with state, nonprofit, and local planning initiatives supporting community revitalization, with a focus on helping communities to capitalize on historic preservation and heritage tourism. Our approach to community planning and enhancement has two major elements:

- **Looking for Lincoln Communities Designation Program:** We are further developing the existing LFL marketing program recognizing visitor-ready communities to add preservation, interpretive, and revitalization strategies. The program creates four levels of community participation: **Story Trail, Partnership, Cornerstone, and Gateway**. Through this program, qualifying community projects will obtain technical assistance, training, matching funds, and collaborative programming.
- **Main Street:** Fourteen communities participate in the **Illinois Main Street Program** within the heritage area, which is one way to meet criteria related to Partnership, Cornerstone, and Gateway Community status. We encourage communities that are not part of the Illinois program to nonetheless use Main Street techniques to help revitalize their historic downtowns.

# Approach to Community Planning and Enhancement



Above: Quincy's large commercial district, an Illinois Main Street community in Adams County. (Courtesy Heritage Strategies, LLC) Below: Vandalia, Fayette County, is a community where interpretation, community enhancement, and historic preservation combine to create a strong visitor experience and to enhance local quality of life. (Courtesy Heritage Strategies, LLC)



# Sustaining the National Heritage Area

Our vision for resource development is to support and sustain the National Heritage Area in perpetuity. We must plan and work for the long term, always asking, “What will it take for the heritage area as a whole to be thriving in a decade?”



Above: Living history interpreter in front of the Old Confederate Jail, Alton, Madison County. (Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition) Next: Executive Director Sarah Watson leads a meeting of representatives of Community Working Groups. (Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition)

LFL and partners are building a sustainable, diversified base of funding in order to support programs described by the management plan. An endowment is to be a part of this effort. To build a strong funding base requires an aggressive focus on developing relationships with potential supporters, guided by strategic five-year plans and detailed annual plans.

Under P.L. 110 229, with an approved management plan in hand, the heritage area qualifies for federal funding, subject to annual Congressional appropriations. Such “seed” funding requires a minimum dollar-for-dollar non-federal match. State, local, and private matching funds exceeding the minimum will be critical to growing support for partner projects and LFL’s capabilities.

LFL has set an ambitious goal of raising more than \$1.6 million in non-heritage-area funds over the next five years, from foundations, corporations, government granting agencies and individuals. LFL anticipates that funding needs will rise after an 18 month startup phase in which LFL and partners will build their programs collectively within current budgetary limits – early action requiring creativity and attention more than additional cash.

LFL’s intangible assets in this quest include a positive reputation and healthy partnerships with Lincoln sites and communities. In addition, our large region provides a broad base and can be expected to attract funders less interested in individual programs or sites. There will be opportunities for interpretive attractions and other partners to leverage resources by collaborating through the heritage area.

As a first phase of action in the 15-year management plan, heritage area partners led by an advisory steering council are building the interpretive system and the program for designating Looking for Lincoln Communities, as well as organizing collaboration with marketing organizations. LFL has also begun developing resources and is enhancing communications.

# Our First Steps

## Building the Interpretive System:

- Share standards for use of the “Looking for Lincoln” identity by partners;
- Overhaul the LFL website as the hub of heritage area communications;
- Evaluate curriculum-based education programs at interpretive sites;
- Establish guidelines for a three-level network of Heritage Interpretive Sites; and
- Develop a matching grant program and offer grants for interpretation and programs at Heritage Interpretive Sites.

## Designating Looking for Lincoln Communities:

- Charge the LFL steering council with finalizing guidelines and initial benefits based on interpretation, visitor services, and revitalization initiatives;

- Establish guidelines and provide assistance for community interpretive plans (including Heritage Interpretive Sites); and
- Develop a matching grant program and offer grants for interpretation and programs in participating communities.

## Collaborating for Promotion:

- Establish a protocol for working with Local Tourism and Convention Bureaus and attractions with advertising budgets to develop yearly, mutually beneficial strategies for cooperative marketing;
- Publicize partners’ educational programs and events;
- Identify a baseline for attendance at attractions and events for use in trend analysis; and
- Publish an electronic community-driven calendar of heritage area-wide events on LFL’s website.

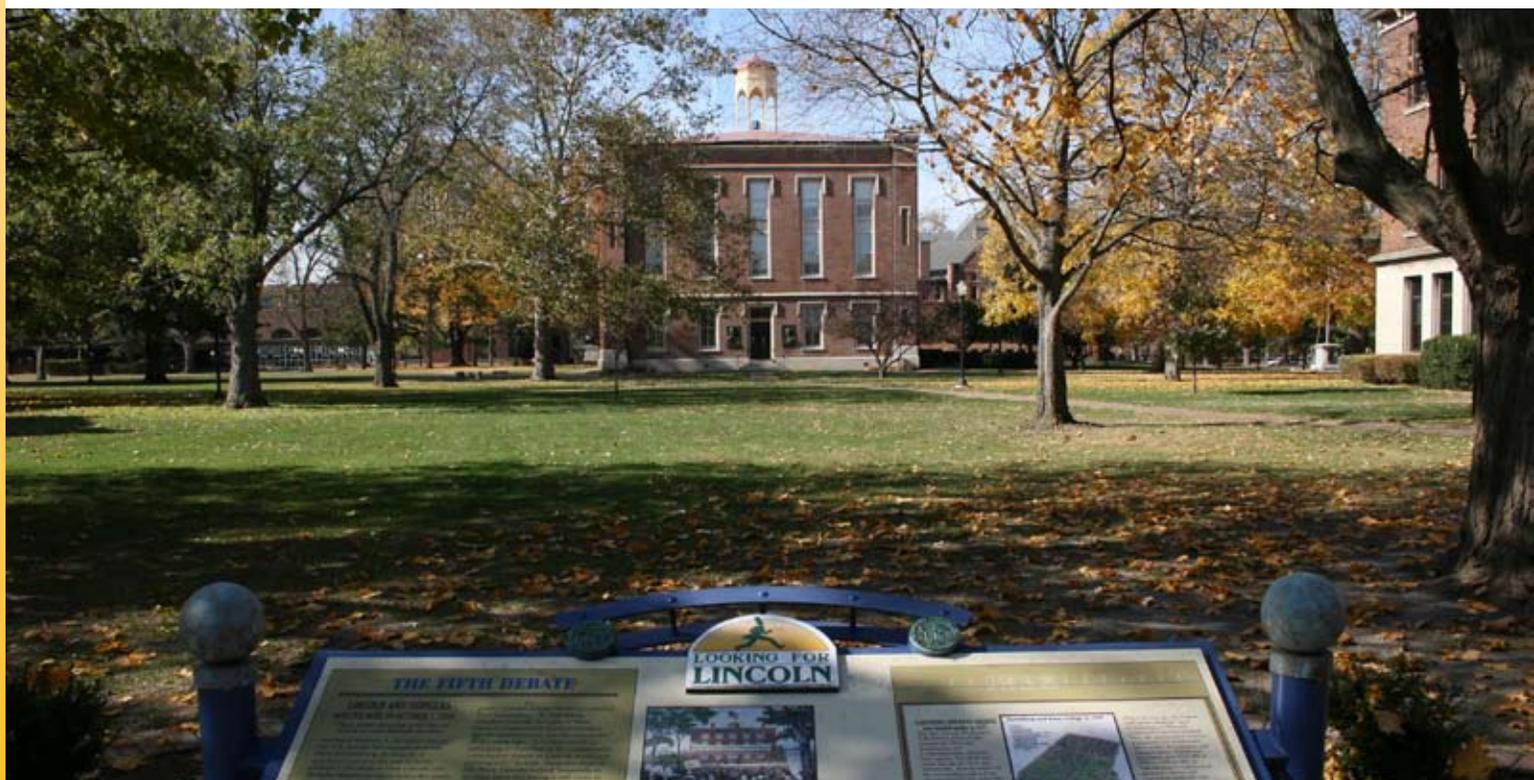
Among the many commitments made by the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition as the coordinating entity named in the federal law establishing the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area, LFL has agreed to provide for “at least semiannual public meetings to ensure adequate implementation of the management plan.” (P.L. 110 -229, Title IV C, Section 444(c)(3)(B)(ii))



# Our Guiding Principles

In addition to the mission, vision, and goals, several guiding principles shape our work.

- **Long-term Interests:** We work in the best long-term interests of central Illinois, its people, communities, natural and historic resources, and environment.
- **Partnership:** We work through a partnership structure; we will welcome and respect each partner's input, perspective, and capabilities.
- **Purpose & Management:** The federal enabling legislation for the heritage area is the fundamental guide for this plan and all programs and actions deriving from it.
- **Planning:** Good planning is key to a successful endeavor. Every action we undertake is well planned for successful implementation.
- **Resource Stewardship:** Historic preservation and natural resource conservation underlie all that we do and are a key means through which we achieve our goals.
- **Communities:** Strong communities are central to our work both in how we are organized and in what we seek to achieve. Community character based upon our shared heritage is among our primary interests.
- **Property & Privacy:** We respect private property rights and the privacy of individuals, especially their homes and neighborhoods.
- **Authenticity:** We support authentic places and seek authentic experiences associated with our heritage and the stories we wish to tell.
- **Sustainability:** We promote ecological and economic sustainability in our planning and our actions. We seek economic sustainability in our organization and operations.
- **Communication & Transparency:** We maintain a policy of openness and frequent communication within our partnership, with other organizations, and with the general public.
- **Hospitality:** We make our neighbors and visitors feel warmly welcomed within our communities and across the region.



*“...that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”*

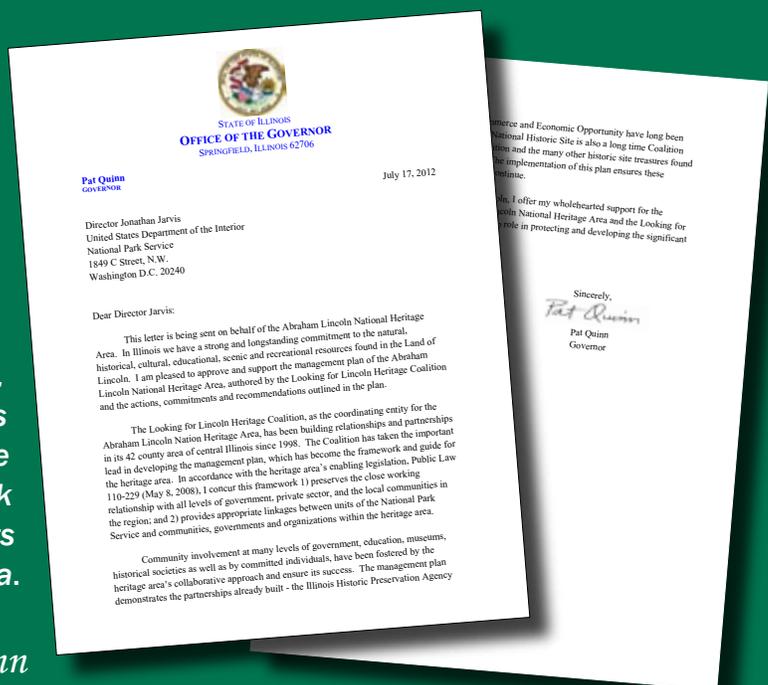
– Lincoln’s Address at the Soldiers’ National Cemetery, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, November 19, 1863



Above: The 114th Illinois Regiment posing with local Boy Scouts in front of the Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site in Springfield. (Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition). Previous: Knox College’s “Old Main,” a Lincoln-era building in Galesburg, Knox County. (Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition)

*In Illinois we have a strong and longstanding commitment to the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic and recreational resources found in the Land of Lincoln.... In accordance with the heritage area’s enabling legislation, Public Law 110-229 (May 8, 2008), I concur this framework 1) preserves the close working relationship with all levels of government, private sector, and the local communities in the region; and 2) provides appropriate linkages between units of the National Park Service and communities, governments and organizations within the heritage area.*

– Governor Pat Quinn



Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition  
Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area  
#1 Old State Capitol Plaza  
Springfield, IL 62701  
217-785-5268  
www.lflhc.org



Above: History comes alive at the Old State Capitol in Springfield. (Courtesy Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition) Front Cover: Abraham Lincoln, candidate for U.S. president. Half-length portrait, seated, facing front. Preston Butler, photographer. Springfield, Illinois, August 13, 1860. Gelatin silver print. Available from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2007686672/>. Background map: A New Map of Illinois, with its proposed canals, roads, and distances. Published by S. Augustus Mitchell, 1846.