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CONTACT: Holly Hollman, Grant Coordinator/Communications Specialist,
City of Athens, hhollman@athensal.us

ATHENS RECEIVES BICENTENNIAL LEGACY AWARD FOR ITS 200TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

A citywide birthday party featuring events ranging from a scavenger hunt to a group photo of citizens and a downtown mural received recognition from the Alabama Bicentennial Commission.

The Commission announced today (April 15) it named the City of Athens a recipient of the Alabama Bicentennial Commendation Award. The bicentennial mural created by Athens High School art students is one of 21 projects in state to win a Legacy Award that will go to the City of Athens.

The honors recognize outstanding projects by communities and organizations participating in the commemoration of the statehood anniversary. Athens, which is older than the State of Alabama, celebrated its 200th birthday with the Athens Bicentennial Bash in Downtown Athens in November 2018.

The bash featured several activities including:



- An Athens High student-created historic scavenger hunt that kicked off at the bicentennial mural and took participants by historic sites;
- Exhibits featuring quilts, bicentennial-themed artwork and displays from Limestone County Archives;
- Recreating a historic Trade Day photo with citizens who gathered on Marion Street;
- A best men's beard and best women's hat contests;
- An Athens trivia contest;
- An international celebration online with our Sister City, Stonehaven, Scotland, that held a birthday party at Castle Fraser with members of the Stonehaven & NE Scotland Twinning Group;
- Tours of Houston Memorial Library and Donnell House;

The City of Athens partnered with the Greater Limestone County Chamber of Commerce and Athens Main Street to host the bash in conjunction with the popular Christmas Open House event on The Square. In addition, the Mayor's Office is working on a pictorial book to commemorate and preserve photos of Athens participating in the three-year statewide bicentennial celebration.

The downtown mural has become a popular spot for photograph backdrops. It features iconic Athens sites and events. Students under the direction of former art teacher Beverly Bobo coordinated with the City to create the mural.

“Numerous volunteers dedicated their time and talents to plan and host our 200th birthday party and celebrate our city's stories and people who



are part of our state’s early history,” Athens Mayor Ronnie Marks said. “These awards are dedicated to those volunteers and our citizens.”

The Alabama Bicentennial Commission gave awards in two categories: commendations for outstanding bicentennial programs and projects and legacy awards for projects of exceptional and lasting impact. The Commission gave 41 commendations and 21 legacy awards, which represented more than 40 municipalities in 35 counties.

“Communities invested time and resources in an amazing range of projects,” said Alabama Bicentennial Commission Chairman Sen. Arthur Orr. “Our successful (state) bicentennial celebration owes a real debt to their efforts, especially for projects that will be important to the state, its communities and its citizens for a long time to come.”

Projects ranged from celebration events to city murals to preservation and restoration of sites and structures. Many projects were locally focused while some were regional or even statewide. Many are especially notable for their long-term relevance and impact.

The awards represented every region of the state and ranged from small towns to major metros.

Each winning project will receive a bronze plaque noting the name of the project and its award. The plaques will be a public reminder of the achievements of Alabama communities during the bicentennial commemoration.

Alabama Bicentennial Commission



The company producing the plaques is closed due to the COVID-19 quarantine. Once the City of Athens receives the plaques, the Mayor's Office will announce plans to dedicate them and publicly thank the local bicentennial committee and volunteers.

For more information about the Alabama Bicentennial Legacy Awards and the bicentennial commemoration, visit www.ALABAMA200.org or call 334-242-4537.