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Bartow History Museum Announces Capital Campaign

Cartersville, Ga. - The Bartow History Museum announced plans today for a capital campaign to raise the funds needed to complete renovations to the 1869 Bartow County courthouse and open it to the public as the Museum's new home.

The capital campaign represents the final phase of a \$2.2 million project. Approximately \$1.7 million was raised through the special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST). This money was used to restore the physical structure to its original grandeur. Now, the Bartow History Museum must raise \$500,000 to complete the final phases of the project - the construction of exhibits and the relocation of the museum into the newly restored building.

"The question everyone asks is, when the Museum will open in its new location," said Bartow History Museum director, Trey Gaines. "The answer is, as soon as we can raise \$500,000, we can start the process of moving the museum into its new home. These funds will pay for designing, updating and fabricating exhibits in the Museum; developing new educational and community programs; and actually moving into the new building," said Gaines.

This is not the first time the residents of Bartow County have united together in support of the 1869 courthouse. In the years immediately following the Civil War, Bartow County families came together and generously donated the funds needed to construct a courthouse for the newly designated county seat. This grass roots effort in the late 1860s resulted in personal and family donations ranging from \$100 to \$1,000. "The amount of these donations is very impressive when you think of what \$100 was worth during the period immediately following the Civil War," said campaign chairperson, Marijon Battles. "Today, over 140 years later, the Bartow History Museum is engaging the citizens of the county in another grassroots effort - this time to bring the old courthouse back to life and establish it as a place of prominence and pride for all citizens of the County" said Battles.

Battles, a native of Bartow County and a descendant of U.S. Senator Rebecca Latimer Felton, represents the Collins Family Trust that has generously made a \$100,000 challenge grant to the campaign. "History is one of my passions, and I feel very strongly about preserving our past for future generations. The historic 1869 courthouse will soon fulfill its destiny as a repository of all things Bartow and a place where students, residents and visitors alike can come to learn and experience the rich history of Bartow County. We need the help of residents and businesses in Bartow County to push this campaign over the top and take this project to completion." Community and civic leaders, Elizabeth Harris, Cherry Parris Gladden, and Dianne Tate have also joined Battles to provide strong leadership to the capital campaign.

To date, supporters from around the community have pledged and contributed over \$160,000 to the campaign. Early support for the project came in April when over 400 guests were invited to

view the renovations and the exhibition plans for the new museum through artist's concept drawings. Plans for the first floor include two galleries – the special exhibition gallery and family interactive gallery – in addition to two special walls featuring old photographs of the county. “Bartow in Pictures” will explore a variety of topics related to Bartow County history through historic photographs, and “The Story of the 1869 Courthouse” will explore the history of the building.

The second floor of the building will house the museum's permanent exhibitions. These exhibitions will be divided into six galleries – A Sense of Place, Bartow Beginnings, The Coming War, People at Work, Community Champions, and Toward New Horizons. As guests walk through the galleries, they will learn about Bartow County's history from the time of the Cherokee Indians through Bartow County of today.

While donations of any amount are accepted and appreciated, Preservation Society donor levels begin at \$150 for individuals and families and \$2,500 for corporations. There are also opportunities available to name galleries or exhibits in someone's honor or memory.

Contributors to the Preservation Society will receive recognition on the Preservation Society Wall of Honor, quarterly updates via the museum's newsletter, a hard hat tour during construction, and an exclusive tour of the museum prior to opening.

If you would like to donate to the Capital Campaign please contact Trey Gaines, director of the Bartow History Museum, (770) 382-3818, Ext 6286 or treyg@bartowhistorymuseum.org.